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Christian Thought
on
Present-Day Questions



Christian Thought

on

Present-Day Questions

Sermons on Special Occasions

By

William Allen Whitworth, M.A.

Vicar of All Saints', Margaret Street

Sometime Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge

With a Preface by

The Bishop of London

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PREFACE

BY THE

BISHOP OF LONDON.

I HAVE great pleasure in writing a few words as Preface to the Sermons selected from those preached in the course of his ministry at All Saints', Margaret Street, by the late Prebendary Allen Whitworth.

I knew and honoured the man ; I am well aware of what his teaching was throughout his life.

There was a sincerity about his character, and a manly ring about his teaching which accounts for the great influence which he exerted not only over his people at All Saints', but far outside, upon the Church at large.

No one was better than Mr. Whitworth in tackling really difficult subjects, whether in the realm of thought or action. I can

remember an able Sermon on the difficult subject of Gambling, which I heard him preach in St. Paul's Cathedral; and the titles of these Sermons by themselves shew that he was not afraid of difficult subjects of thought.

It is in the hope that his treatment of these subjects will help many minds, and his tender sympathies with doubt and difficulty will comfort many hearts that we send forth this book to the world.

A. F. LONDON.

FEAST OF ST. MATTHIAS,
1906.

FOREWORD BY THE EDITOR.

AN editor's task is simple ; he must present his material in a form most agreeable to the mind of the author, and most easily digestible by the mind of the reader.

Allen Whitworth conceived highly of the ministry of preaching ; all his best powers were devoted to its service. Possessed of a keenly analytical mind, thoroughly conversant with modern thought, especially where it impinges on the Christian Revelation, he noted the first signs of collision and delighted in exercising his intellect upon the difficult questions thus raised ; conspicuous fearlessness invariably characterised his statement of the position.

“ Throughout my life, I have owed little or nothing to other men's thoughts ” ; this witness once fell from his lips ; it is characteristically true. If the independence here implied has its drawbacks, it certainly has

its attractions ; an originality of thought or of treatment invites and retains attention.

Some of the fruits of this originality are gathered into the present volume. In substance the argument and line of thought are precisely what they were as they came from the preacher's lips ; the alterations which have been made are confined to a resetting of some sentences so as to bring out the reasoning with greater clearness, and to the omission here and there of a few words which were more suited for oral delivery than for the printed page.

Of references a few only are given ; these are added in cases where the passage quoted or the event mentioned may not readily suggest themselves to the mind.

The editor's task has been a tribute of affection willingly rendered to the memory of one, whom to know was to love.

WILLOUGHBY CARTER.

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I.

THE SPIRITUAL UNIVERSE AND TRANSCENDENTAL SPACE.

Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, Sept. 14th, 1902.

THAT ye may be able to comprehend with all
saints what is the breadth and length and depth
and height.

Ephesians iii. 18.

THE city lieth four square, the length and the
breadth and the height of it are equal.

Revelation xxi. 16.

IN the former of these two texts we have
four dimensions of space where we should
expect only three.

In the second, where we should expect
the area of the city to have only length and
breadth, we have three dimensions.

Plainly the language belongs to an order
of space beyond that in which we have our
physical experience.

I.

When we first began to study geometry
our attention was confined to figures in a

plane. Our geometry was only of two dimensions: our figures had length and breadth, but the idea of thickness or solidity was altogether beyond the range of our geometrical perceptions. We could only study the surface or superficies of a body, any points beneath or above the surface were out of reach of our limited methods, and beyond the cognisance of our philosophy.

As far as our studies in the first six books of Euclid were concerned, space had but two dimensions. A point in space, the minutest distance above our plane or below it, was practically, at an infinite distance from us, for we had no means in the range of our geometry either of reaching it, or of representing its position. When we passed into the eleventh book of Euclid and found a third dimension for space, length and breadth and height, we felt ourselves to be in a new world, we had passed into another universe.

Even more striking was the transition if we were versed not only in the geometry of Euclid, but also in the analytical methods of Descartes. Our two variables carried us all over the plane of our investigation, every

point in the plane had its co-ordinates, every curve in the plane had its proper equation, and every equation had its own curve, but always in the plane. Sometimes, indeed, we found our equations satisfied by what the algebraist calls imaginary values, and we sometimes dreamed that we had herein an indication of points outside our plane: but though we traced in algebraical symbol these imaginary branches of our curve, we could find no geometrical conception to correspond to them. Until we acquired the use of a third variable, we found no real existence except in our plane. Our plane existed and nothing else until the hour of emancipation when we passed into a new atmosphere, a new universe in space of three dimensions.

And to our mundane senses it seems as if we had now reached the limit of the conception of space. We understand length and breadth and height; they constitute solidity, capacity, volume, and it does not seem to us as if any higher order of space were possible. The motions of the universe are in three dimensions, the matter of the universe exists in space of length and breadth and height, and it is not conceivable by our

4 The Spiritual Universe

conscious senses that there should be space of four dimensions, in regard to which the space of which we are cognisant stands only in the same relation as surface to solidity. We have no word to express a fourth dimension in space, because we have no conception of such a dimension. If we speak of breadth and length and depth and height it is a mere adaptation of language, truer in sound than in sense, for to speak accurately depth and height are the same dimension measured in the one case downwards and in the other upwards.

This higher order of space may fitly be spoken of as "transcendental space," transcending and surpassing the limits of palpable experience. One dimension measures a line, two dimensions measure a surface, three dimensions measure a solid, and four dimensions measure the transcendental space of which we speak: it is super-space.

And though this transcendental space is beyond our mundane experience, and therefore beyond our power of conception, its conditions are not beyond the range of human reason. The mathematician in fact finds no greater difficulty in extending his

analysis from three dimensions of space to four, than he found long ago in extending it from two to three.

And the fact that we cannot conceive a space of four dimensions has little force as an argument against the existence of a universe in such space, when we reflect that if we existed only in space of two dimensions we should have no idea that a third dimension were possible. If all our senses and our actions and our relationships one to another were confined to one plane, the third dimension of space would, I suppose, be as much beyond our cognisance as it was beyond the range of our plane geometry. Under such conditions, beings might be quite close to us yet being out of our plane they would be not existent to our senses. They might be moving around us, but except for an instant in which they crossed the plane of our consciousness we should neither hear them nor see them, nor feel their touch. Equally must the denizens of transcendental space be imperceptible to our present constitution.

6 The Spiritual Universe

II.

I am not going to assert dogmatically that this transcendental space has some actual existence: but this much is certain, that though it exists only as a mathematical generalisation, many of its conditions correspond identically with those which we must predicate of the spiritual universe. If the spiritual universe be not actually in space of four dimensions, it fulfils most accurately the conditions of such space. If we have no warrant to say that the transcendental space which science hypothetically constructs is objectively the heavenly world, we may at least think of it as the scientific representation of the sphere of spiritual operations, the scientific antitype of heaven.

Where, then, is the heaven into which Christ has ascended, and to which we hope to come? We answer it is here, it is everywhere, it extends throughout the infinity of Cosmos; it does more—it fills that transcendental space in comparison with which the infinity of the material universe is but a plane. Heaven is here; comprehending earth, though earth comprehends it not. It is here, its consciousness enveloping us

though our consciousness reach not unto it. It is wherever we are, but in space of an order which our measures cannot probe. It belongs to an order of things in which a four square city becomes a solid cube, "the length and the breadth and the height of it were equal," and in which solidity hath breadth and length and depth and height.

III.

When we read that our Lord Jesus Christ was seen to ascend from Olivet into heaven we are not to infer that heaven had a local position in the zenith of Olivet, or indeed anywhere else in that which we know as space. We do not suppose that if His Body had been vertically raised for millions of miles above the earth It would have entered into a region of space constituting heaven. The visible ascension was but the sign that He made to His disciples of His departure when He withdrew from mundane space into that which we have called transcendental. If He had simply vanished out of their sight, as He had already vanished again and again since His resurrection, the disciples would have expected His re-appearance.

It was necessary to shew them that His visible contact with earth was being removed ; He was no longer to be thought of as locally at hand, ready upon occasion to manifest Himself in the flesh : His sojourn on earth was complete, He was about to sit down, as St. Paul says, in the heavenly places, no longer to return to local companionship with His disciples, though they should continue to find communion with Him in a manner which has been described as supra-local. So He shewed Himself to them rising above the land, separate from earth, till a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Symbolically heaven is always above us. The call to heaven is the call to high thought and high action, upward above the grovellings of earth. Ethically, but not locally, Heaven is above us.

So Christ in His Ascension did not depart to a distance from us, though He departed from the sphere of our sensible perception. He passed from the palpable universe of breadth and length and depth, to the impalpable universe of breadth and length and depth and height. But as mundane space contains within itself all mundane planes, so

space of four dimensions must contain all spaces of three dimensions; heaven must contain all earth. If Christ be no longer locally in the flesh in our universe, we are yet comprehended in the Universe of His Being and in the eternity of His divine consciousness.

IV.

My brethren, we are not altogether of the earth earthy. We have indeed an earthly part which is subject to the laws of the material world, but we have spiritual faculties also, the sphere of whose exercise is in the immaterial, the transcendental universe. "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." In the one we have cognisance of natural things, in the other we enter beyond the veil.

Christ comes to us not now after the flesh, but He is not far off, and we are able to go unto Him in spirit, and enter into that Presence which is neither material nor local, which belongs to the higher sphere, in regard to which the material world is but as a single plane.

In this Epistle to the Ephesians St. Paul

uses an uncommon phrase¹ no less than five times to denote that which is beyond the material universe. The phrase is translated "heavenly places," but it is plain that he does not mean heaven itself in the restricted sense in which heaven denotes the place of glory in the Presence of God, for in the sixth chapter he speaks of the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. We can only interpret the word in the wide sense in which it denotes the whole universe of super-space, the transcendental space of which we have spoken. This he describes in the first chapter as the sphere of spiritual blessing for men. In the twentieth verse he declares that it is in this sphere that God has set Christ on His Right Hand. In this sphere also he declares in the second chapter that God has made us to sit with Him in Christ Jesus. And in the third chapter he sets it forth as the divine purpose that through the Church the wisdom of God might be made known to principalities and powers in this same sphere.

If we compare these passages we perceive that there was present to St. Paul's mind a

¹ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις.

universe of life and action outside the material universe; a universe into which Christ entered at the Ascension—a universe in which the powers of good and evil are ranged, into which we now enter with our spiritual faculties in Christ, and in which we find our blessing.

V.

Some practical considerations follow from our subject:

(1) As Christ has passed from the limited sphere of the material world into the illimitable super-space, we must not try to drag Him back. And we are certainly asking to drag Him back when we demand some thing which, in the technical language of the schoolmen, may be described as a *material* or *local* presence in the Sacrament.

(2) We must remember that we belong in Christ to those heavenly places into which He has entered. There is a sense in which it may be said we can go to Him, but He can not return to us. He is indeed ever present, but not in the material sense, not in space, but in super-space. We find Him not after the flesh, but we have our con-

versation in heaven, where He sitteth at the Right Hand of God. In heart and mind we thither ascend, where we shall hereafter reign with Him in glory.

(3) Think of this space in which we live and move as permeated with that super-space in which there live and move "angels and archangels and all the company of heaven." We speak of the Eucharistic worship on earth as the counterpart of the heavenly worship: but where is the heavenly altar, or where is the heavenly throne? Should we be nearer to it if we were to rise thousands of miles or millions of miles above the earth? Not so. It has no latitude or longitude. Its place can not be reckoned in the terms that measure cosmic space. If the worship of the Church on earth is a reflection of the heavenly, it is not as we see it represented in a picture, the altar below and the throne of God above it: the picture is true enough as a picture, for it only purports to be symbolically correct. In very reality heaven is here, the heavenly worship is going on here, the super-space is full of it, and where it strikes the plane of the material universe

there it is manifested in earthly worship. The heavenly worship embraces the earthly, and the earthly is a phase of the heavenly.

(4) Think of the infinity of transcendental space as filled with the love of God: "that ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." The apostle writes with a sense of the wonderful capacity of man—the inner man, as he calls him, to shew that he is not referring to those faculties which belong to earth and to cosmic space. Man enters by his spirit into the potentialities and vitalities of super-space: there the eyes of his understanding are opened to know the breadth and length and depth and height; and throughout the infinity of this larger universe he perceives the love of Christ, and is himself pervaded with the fulness of God. Surely they are things which the natural eye hath not seen nor the natural ear heard, neither hath it entered into the natural heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath pre-

pared even here and now for them that love Him.

(5) Lastly, while we contemplate the fact of the Ascension, let us not disregard its symbolism. Though heaven is not locally above us in space, heaven is ethically above us. Upward is the call. If we do not aspire to things above we shall inevitably grovel lower and lower. Upward we must rise to all that is high and holy, to all that is heavenly and unselfish, after the pattern of the Divine Love.

Sursum Corda! Lift up your hearts!
We lift them up unto the Lord.

II.

TELEPATHY AND THE DIVINE VOICE.

Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, Sept. 18th, 1898.

THE invisible things of God are understood by
the things that are made.

Romans i. 20.

USUALLY at this season of the year the high priests of God's revelation in the Book of Nature give an account of their ministry in the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. That meeting never takes place without exciting deep interest and suggesting subjects of fertile thought in the minds of Christian people.

This must indeed be so, for all truth is God's truth, and every fact established, even in the most obscure department of science, is, as far as it goes, a revelation of God. Creation witnesses to the Creator, and the laws of the Universe reveal the mind of the Law-giver.

I.

The startling question has been asked, How long will the food-stuffs of the world suffice to meet the rapid increase in the population of the globe : or, more specifically, how long will the bread-stuffs of the world suffice ; the growth of population being most marked among the races with whom bread is the staff of life ? And this interesting question is not to be set aside by the reply that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. This is indeed an answer of faith : we are assured therein that all is in the hands of the good God, and that His purposes will be ultimately fulfilled for good. But there is no guarantee against a time when the growth of population may be checked by the sheer insufficiency of food ; there is no pledge that the supply and demand may not become so nicely balanced that the world shall be continually on the verge of famine, and dire suffering and distress be entailed upon the weakest in the community.

It is therefore no part of Faith to set aside the President's question as irrelevant

to the true believer. On the contrary, our very faith in the good providence of God gives us the keener interest in all that science may have to say upon such a subject.

II.

In the processes of nature nothing is ever destroyed. Elements may be resolved and transformed, decomposed and combined in new association, but they cannot be lost. The human body has to be fed, but the matter with which it is fed is neither destroyed nor locked up in any eternal grave: it returns again to the earth and conduces to the vegetable growth, which is food either for man, or for the animals on which man feeds. There is no question as to the existence of the elements which are to make the food of man, whatever be the rate at which the population may increase: the question is, whether vegetable growth can keep pace with the increase of human life: whether the processes by which the earth produces the staff of life can be so quickened as to supply the anticipated demands of the next century? On this

point the President's announcements are reassuring. It does not even appear that the chemist will have to supersede the beneficent processes of vegetable growth; it would seem that he will rather quicken those processes and make them more fruitful, so that mankind may still look to the gifts of Mother Earth to supply her children's needs. In a literal sense the words shall still be found true, "While the earth remaineth seed-time and harvest shall not fail."

III.

But no part of the inaugural address is of greater interest to us as Christians than the concluding section, in which the President spoke of telepathy and other psychic phenomena. He describes this subject as constituting for him "the weightiest and the farthest reaching" of all his interests. "Thirty years have passed," he says, "since I published an account of experiments tending to shew that outside our scientific knowledge there exists a Force exercised by intelligence differing from the ordinary intelligence common to mortals. I have nothing to retract. I have now glimpses

of something like coherence among the strange elusive phenomena; of something like continuity between those unexplained forces and laws already known." He regards the investigation of telepathy as the proper starting point in these studies, commencing with the fundamental law, that "thoughts and images may be transferred from one mind to another without the agency of the recognised organs of sense: that knowledge may enter the human mind without being communicated in any hitherto known or recognised ways."

Telepathy means that the mind of one person is affected by the mind of another person without any outward communication between them. A thought in my mind generates the same thought in the mind of a person near me, or an image conceived in my mind produces the like image in the mind of another person. Telepathy perhaps plays a more important part in life than we generally suspect.

Persons often ask me to let them read some sermon which I have preached. I generally refuse, but if I consent they are invariably disappointed in the result. The

sermon which seemed clear and expressive in delivery appears dull and obscure when the manuscript is read. And why? You will explain the difference by the power of the living voice, or the effect of personality in the speaker. Well, but what is the effect of personality? If it is only the moral influence of the particular person, you have it equally whether you hear his words or read them. It is something more. Is it not telepathy? Is it not that while I speak to you, you not only hear my words by the hearing of the ear, but simultaneously my thoughts are conveyed from mind to mind, or from brain to brain, so that you receive them as by a system of wireless telegraphy, or, to use the proper term, you receive them by telepathy?

IV.

But you may say, these are interesting facts of Science, what have they to do with Faith or Revelation: how do they specially concern us as Christians?

To me it seems that these earthly things throw much light on certain heavenly things. Grave difficulties have been raised as to

the mode by which God may have spoken to men in times past. Could it have been really the Voice of God which they heard, or did they attribute to God only the imaginings of their own hearts? And when we speak of God the Holy Ghost dwelling in us now, under the Christian dispensation, and enlightening us, men are disposed to ask, How can these things be? They are not conscious that God is influencing them, they have gone through no experience in which they have recognised any operation of the Holy Ghost. Man they say is complete in himself as man, and self-contained, his thoughts are due to himself alone, he hears no Voice of God within: no mode in which he could hear it is known to them. They acknowledge a conscience within themselves, but they do not see how that conscience can be illuminated by the Holy Ghost. They acknowledge that conscience may be influenced by education, by converse and intercourse, by study and thought; these are all obvious and palpable means to an end. But the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, still more that which Christians mean by communion with Christ, these wonders are

altogether of another category : men do not see how such things can be.

v.

If, however, telepathy is a fact, if we are constantly receiving thoughts and images from minds around us, who is to lay down the law and say that a Divine Mind alone is incapable of influencing us? If without our knowledge and without our will the mind of a neighbour exercises an inductive power over our mind, who shall say that it is impossible or inconceivable that the Divine Intelligence in the Person of the Holy Ghost should produce any such induction?

I am not saying that telepathy explains the action of God either upon the mind or the heart of man, but I certainly think that telepathy illustrates such action, and it furnishes us at least with this argument, that if human telepathy be a fact of Science, divine telepathy, or a telepathy between God and man, cannot be inconceivable, unreasonable, or in the nature of things impossible.

VI.

Every day Science is teaching us to be cautious in the use of the word "impossible." Every discovery opens a door through which we gaze farther into the unknown, and find possible things which yesterday were declared to be impossible. Science teaches us to say in all humility we do not know. And if earthly things are beyond our knowledge, is it strange that we cannot unveil the mysteries of heavenly things? Science teaches us by its very disabilities to be humble in the Faith.

VII.

We are taught that every thought or image in our mind is accompanied by a physical change in our brain. Scientific writers like to assume that the physical change in the brain causes the impression in the mind, which implies that the cause is physical and the result psychic: but I suppose that if the psychic effect could be independently produced the physical effect would ensue by reflex action. There does not seem to be warrant for any farther assumption than that the two synchronise.

If the proper physical change occurs in the brain, the corresponding image is produced in the mind: if the image can be suggested to the mind, then the corresponding physical change necessarily takes place in the brain.

There are, therefore, two possible explanations of telepathy. A physical change takes place in my brain, and synchronously an image is formed in my mind. As a consequence of this, in virtue of telepathy an analogous physical change takes place in your brain and a corresponding image is formed in your mind. We must make one or other of two assumptions. We may assume that a train of physical causes leads from the motion in my brain to the motion in yours, and from these two motions the two mental images are derived; or we may believe that a train of psychic causes carries the mental impression from one mind to the other, and that the corresponding motions in the brain ensue by reflex action. The President maintains that the former hypothesis alone is possible. Doubtless it is the only hypothesis that will bring telepathy within the range of physical science; but I submit that the other hypothesis, suggesting

a much larger correspondence in spiritual things, is at least tenable and worthy of serious consideration.

VIII.

But apart from this the connection of the physical change with the mental impression is very suggestive to us in relation to the doctrine of the Sacraments. If the Sacraments are not merely empty signs and tokens, there is a connection in them between the material thing and the grace which accompanies it. We cannot explain this connection, but we may at least accept as illustrations the striking analogues which Science furnishes.

IX.

I cannot conclude without reference to the clear and strong declarations so fearlessly made on the subject of vitalism. There was a time when some of our great scientists denied the prerogative which is now allowed to Life. To-day it is admitted that no fortuitous or other concurrence of atoms could produce life; nor can life be self-created by the compounding of that in which

there is no life. Life cannot be evolved from matter whatever mechanical forces be brought into operation. Only life can produce life. So the President of the chemical section declared. "No fortuitous concourse of atoms, even with all eternity for them to clash and combine in, could compass this feat of the first optically active organic compound. Coincidence is excluded, and every purely mechanical explanation of the phenomenon must necessarily fail. I see no escape from the conclusion that, at the moment when life first arose, a directive force came into play—a force implying the exercise of intelligence and will."

X.

May we not hope that the day is passed and gone, never to return, in which Faith and Science were regarded as opposing forces? Whatever is true must be a help and not a hindrance to our knowledge even of God Himself. Doubtless many of the conclusions of Science are only tentative. Induction and generalization are liable to error, and further observation may lead to the modification or even to the abandonment

of some hypothesis which for a time seemed to be certainly established.

Science makes mistakes, but Science is always correcting her own mistakes. Whenever a scientific certainty is reached it is part of the irresistible truth of God's Universe, and it betrays the grossest want of faith to suppose that it can be contrary to the Faith. If the revelation of truth in nature seems to contradict the revelation of truth in the Bible and in the Church, we have misunderstood the one or the other, for Truth cannot contradict Truth.

I have heard it said that medical students are in great danger of becoming materialists. If it be so the reason is plain; medical students are not of an age to have studied the great questions of our spiritual and material being from every side, and there may be a danger that a young man should, for the moment, be carried away by some impetuous and hasty inference which he supposes to follow from the one aspect of Nature on which his attention is concentrated; but presently he is led to reflect that there is more in man than is laid bare in the theatre or dissecting-room of

the hospital. It is my happiness to have known a large number of the medical profession, and I can say without hesitation that I have found no class of laymen so reverent in the profession of a sound and sober Faith as our great physicians and surgeons. I can never believe that the study of Science is hostile to Faith: I am quite sure that the contrary is the case.

XI.

Let us therefore without misgiving take up the noble words of the Bishop of Bristol, and pray "that God will richly bless the honest, earnest, fearless students of His own mighty and wonderful works, and will strengthen them to tell out their views of those works with boldness, wheresoever they may seem to lead."

A fuller knowledge of the works of God can be no hindrance to our knowledge of God Himself and of Jesus Christ Whom He has sent.

III.

MODERN CRITICISM AND THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.¹

Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, Sept. 25th, 1904.

BE not moved away from the hope of the
gospel which ye have heard. Col. i. 23.

THE writer of an article in a popular Review for this month makes certain assumptions in which (to say the least) I am unable to follow him, and he appears to have a very inadequate apprehension of the position held by many intelligent believers in the Christian revelation.

There are four points in particular at which I should traverse Mr. Mallock's position.

I.

The author refers to the cases of two clergymen who have published opinions

¹ NOTE.—The following Sermon was published as an article in the *XIX. Century and After*, November, 1904, under the title of *Free Thought in the Church of England*. It is here reproduced by the courteous permission of the Editor of that Review.

bringing down upon them the censure of their bishops. He asks, "Now, what is it precisely that these two clergymen have done? They have merely ventured to apply to parts of the New Testament those methods of scholarship, criticism, and ordinary common-sense which the Bishop of Worcester has been foremost in declaring that we must apply to the Old; and as the honest result" of their methods they have arrived at certain conclusions.

Here it is necessary to distinguish between the methods and the results arrived at: because other students adopting the like methods, with at least equal honesty, have arrived at different results. Have these clergymen been censured for the methods they have used or for the conclusions they have reached? Mr. Mallock fails to make this distinction, but his arguments are plainly based upon the assumption that the methods rather than the conclusions have been condemned.

If we thought this we should indeed be disquieted; for if we are not to use the methods of "scholarship, criticism, and ordinary common-sense" in studying the

credentials of our Christianity, our Church must be at once condemned as an institution of obscurantism. Our position is indeed despicable if we dare not bring our documents to the light, and study them with all the legitimate helps of "scholarship, criticism, and ordinary common-sense."

But "scholarship, criticism, and ordinary common-sense" are not instruments of such precision that everyone using them is led to the same conclusion. Mr. Mallock makes the unwarrantable assumption that the conclusions at which the two clergymen have arrived are the necessary results of their method. But even these two differ very widely as to their conclusions; whilst other students, confessedly their superiors in scholarship, certainly not less versed in the art of criticism, and (as most people would judge) not beneath them in common-sense, have reached by these methods a very different position. It is plain that these two clergy were censured not for their scholarship, not for their method of criticism, but for the conclusions to which their scholarship and their criticism, honestly, but perhaps unskillfully, applied, carried them.

And if anyone thinks that the Church ought to be so wide as to embrace or allow every opinion that is honestly held, let such a one reflect that no Church can possibly exist without some symbol of limitation to give *raison d'être* to membership. A society must have a rule. A Church must have a creed. No association can exist unless membership in it means something. The members must be bound together either by believing something or by doing something, and in a Church one can hardly have the doing without the believing. Let the Church boldly invite scholarship, criticism, and the judgment of common-sense; but there will always be the risk that the uncertain use of these faculties may bring the individual into a position which the Church cannot endorse.

It is, therefore, no reproach to a Church to say that while she encourages liberal thought and honest criticism, she draws a line somewhere. There are conclusions which may not be taught in her name. She has her formularies and her symbols, which may not be transgressed.

II.

Next, I demur to the position which the author of the article assumes in regard to the Virgin birth of Christ. While he holds the Church responsible for the speculations of mediæval times upon the subject, he appears to misapprehend altogether the place of this doctrine in the scheme of the Christian faith.

There are some doctrines of Christianity of such supreme importance that we cannot conceive any preaching of the Gospel without them. There are other elements of the faith which are rather incidental and elucidatory. They may be accessory to the support of cardinal doctrines. They may be accepted by the Church as revealed truth, and yet, if they had never been revealed, the ethics and the hope of Christianity would still have been what they are. For example, we cannot think of any preaching of the Gospel that did not tell of Christ as a supernatural person. He was not the mere hereditary product of His age and generation. His coming constituted a new departure in the relations of God to man. He was in a unique sense the Son of God.

The Godhead was incarnate in Him. And when we say this we are at once implying a miracle. Only by a miracle of some sort could He be what we have described. And if miracle is to be admitted, one mode of miracle is as much within God's power as another, and one form of miracle is as credible as another. What particular form the necessary miracle took is of quite secondary consideration.

In regard to the person of Christ, the essential fact is His divinity. The precise method by which it pleased the fulness of God to dwell in Him bodily is of comparatively little account.

Now, think of any Apostle preaching Christianity as a new religion. From Christian premises what should we expect him to say? Certainly he would speak of Christ as the Divine Son of God. But should we expect him in every sermon to describe the mode by which the Godhead became incarnate? The story of the Virgin birth represents to us the process by which the Word was made flesh. But the Divine Wisdom might have accomplished the same end by other means. What is of importance

is not how it was done, but, in fact, that it was done. When, therefore, Mr. Mallock and others dwell upon the circumstance that St. John does not mention the Virgin birth, we say, But does not St. John insist upon the divinity of Christ? It is St. John who tells us that "the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." It is, in fact, admitted that St. John gives more prominence than any other writer to the divinity of Christ, though he does not tell us by what particular intervention the Word was made flesh. The result must have been accomplished in some way. If St. John does not mention the Virgin birth as the way, at least he does not suggest any other way.

The Virgin birth, says Mr. Mallock, is only mentioned by two Evangelists. But, I ask, why do we care about the incident of the Virgin birth at all? Only because it witnesses to the divinity of Christ. And if the divinity of Christ be the real doctrine in question, St. John and St. Paul are at least as clear and explicit upon this point as St. Matthew and St. Luke.

Mr. Mallock speaks of the Virgin birth as an alleged "physiological fact," and he very needlessly discusses what he supposes to have been the Christian hypothesis—that the imperfection of human nature is due to the human father, and not to the human mother. This is not a correct statement of the hypothesis of mediæval speculation on this subject. But really the question does not concern us. The Church is not pledged to any mediæval speculation, and, from the Christian point of view, the fact that the Word was made flesh is not a physiological fact, but a miracle, outside the range of the laws of physiology.

On this account we give no encouragement to the essays of well-meaning people who cite instances of apparent parthenogenesis in nature as illustrations of the mystery of Christ's birth. Happily there is no force whatever in these illustrations. If they had any validity, they could only tend to establish the birth of the Sinless One as an accident of nature rather than as the miracle of God. But by whatever freak of nature a man might be born untainted with the hereditary depravity of his race,

it certainly could only be by the miracle of God that the Eternal Word could be made flesh.

III.

Mr. Mallock represents the apologists for Christianity as having thrown over all the miracles of the New Testament with the exception of four: the Virgin birth, the Divinity of Christ, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. All the rest, he says, "are brushed aside as legends or misconceptions of fact, either because the evidences for them are worthless or contradictory, or because they are inconsistent with facts as we now know them." The Bishop of Worcester (he says) "leaves only four remaining; and can any reasonable man believe that [the Bishop] has succeeded in showing that the evidence for these is any better than the evidence for the rest?" In another passage Mr. Mallock speaks with contempt of clerical experts drawing nice distinctions between "the mass of unbelievable miracles and a privileged minority of four." But Mr. Mallock certainly misapprehends the distinction between the four

miracles and the rest. It is not that the rest are unbelievable. We do not make more of the four because of the better evidence in their favour, but because of their inherent importance in their closer bearing on the Christian faith. This is seen in a moment when we consider that if the incident of the walking on the sea, or the feeding of the multitude, or the raising of Lazarus were blotted out of the Gospel records, Christianity would still remain what it is; but if belief in the Incarnation and in the Resurrection were surrendered, Christianity would be radically transformed or overthrown.

I prefer to speak of the four miracles as two. I have already said that the Virgin birth is only an incident in the mode of the Incarnation; and the Ascension is a detail consequent upon the Resurrection. When we speak of the Incarnation and the Resurrection we are practically covering the ground. These two miracles are vital to Christianity in a sense that can be predicated of none other. With the Incarnation of Christ Christianity (as we know it) stands or falls, and with regard to the

Resurrection we may say, with St. Paul, "If Christ be not risen, then your faith is vain."

The miracles of the Incarnation and the Resurrection are thus distinguished from other miracles by their essential relation to our faith, and not because of the stronger evidence with which they are supported. Nevertheless (*pace* Mr. Mallock), critics must admit that there is immeasurably stronger testimony for these two miracles than for any other. Compare, for example, the evidence for the raising of Lazarus with that for the Resurrection of Christ.

For the one we have a simple narrative written, perhaps, sixty or seventy years after the event. There is no corroboration of the story. It is not referred to in any of the Apostolic sermons or addresses recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. It is not appealed to in any of the Epistles. There is no reference to it (where we might well expect such) in the Apologies of Justin Martyr. The Resurrection of Christ, on the contrary, was the great subject of Apostolic testimony. In the first chapter of the Acts Matthias was chosen

to be a "witness of the Resurrection." In the fourth chapter: "With great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection." St. Paul, like St. Peter, "preached Jesus and the Resurrection"; and the Epistles are full of reference to the same fact.

And as the first preachers of Christianity are represented as habitually proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ, so they are said to have proclaimed His supernatural personality. St. Peter, indeed, treats the Resurrection as the necessary corollary of this. He being what He was, it was not possible that He should be holden of death. Thus we have testimony that from the very first the Incarnation and the Resurrection were of the substance of the Gospel which was preached.

But when once these miracles of the Incarnation and the Resurrection are accepted, the other miracles fall into place and become the more reasonable. For if Christ was God incarnate, and His coming was an event unique in the history of the world, we should expect His sojourn on earth to be attended by unique phenomena. The

credibility of any miracle depends, not on the measure of its strangeness, but on the worthiness of the purpose for which it was alleged to have been worked. So it is what we believe of the personality of Jesus that supplies adequate motive for His works. Given that He was the Son of God, what a stumbling-block would have been presented to the faith if in His life there had been nothing to indicate His Divine power. When we claim distinction for the miracles of His personality, we are not relegating the other miracles to the category of legends or misconceptions; on the contrary, the miracle of His supernatural Being makes the miracles of His ministry the more easily credible.

IV.

Lastly, Mr. Mallock seems to misapprehend the place of the Gospel narratives in regard to the foundation of Christianity. He writes as if any inaccuracy in the narratives would be fatal to our claims. He seems to overlook the fact that the Church existed and flourished for thirty years—many think for fifty years or more—

before any of our present Gospels were written, and for fully a century before they were received as canonical Scripture.

It is well, perhaps, for us to consider here how we should present Christianity to an unbelieving world. We should not begin by insisting on minute details of Gospels or Acts, nor should we rely on isolated phrases in the Epistles of the New Testament. This would only be to provoke quibbles of verbal criticism and an endless controversy on the authority of the documents. We should rather begin with the broad facts which no one disputes—the admitted facts of history. Such historical facts are derived partly from profane records, partly, also, from Christian literature; but this literature viewed not from the point of view of the theologian, or even of the Christian, but from that of the expert historian.

We may take it as an admitted fact of history¹ that about the middle of the first century of our era a new religion was being propagated with extraordinary rapidity and success in almost all parts of the civilised

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, XV. 44.

world ; that the founder of this religion was one Jesus Christ, who had been crucified at Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate ; that His followers, to whom its first promulgation was due, were, for the most part, illiterate men, but that there was something in their message which caused it to spread like wildfire, so that by the end of the century, in every city of the Roman world, there were societies of men and women meeting in the name of this Christ, singing praises to Him as to a God ; while in some provinces the name of Christ became so powerful that, a year or two after the close of the century, the most famous governor¹ of his day writes to the Emperor to complain that the temples of the national gods are deserted, and asking what policy he is to pursue.

We might enlarge on the wonderful advance of the next two centuries, in which the faith may be said to have overcome the world. But, proverbially, it is the beginnings that are difficult. We may, therefore, fix our attention on the first preachers of Christianity, who inaugurated

¹ Pliny to Trajan, A.D. 112.

that success of which history tells. They must have had a message of tremendous power to move mankind as they did. It is nowhere suggested that they were themselves highly gifted men, trained in rhetoric or in philosophy. All evidence concurs to prove that Christianity was spread by the testimony of simple men to simple men. The power was not in the men, but in the message.

What was the power? We get the answer from our Christian documents. But without the Christian writings we know that there must have been the power, for its effect is a matter of history. Let the Christian literature be reduced to its lowest terms in the crucible of criticism, the fact still remains that the first preachers of the new religion had a convincing message to deliver, a gospel of power. If the Acts of the Apostles be a forgery, and the Gospels be romances of the second century, it must still be asked, What was the power that so wondrously prevailed in the first century?

What was the message which the disciples of Jesus had to deliver? Did they simply tell that they had known a peasant of Galilee

who spoke graciously and inculcated a universal charity? Did they speak of a mere man—though the best of men—but one who was now dead and gone? Did they tell of an ordinary being like themselves or like ourselves—his life attested by nothing supernatural, his death crowned by no sign of victory?

Surely no one is so insane as to suppose that this was the Gospel that overcame the world!

Mr. Mallock asserts that belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures is essential to the Christian faith. From the context of his article I infer that he means such an inspiration as would secure the Scriptures from the possibility of any inaccuracy of detail, however unimportant. The Christian is not bound to believe in any such inspiration. He believes that the Apostles and the Evangelists were men full of the Holy Ghost; but he knows that each wrote in his own style, their science was that of their age, and in compiling their memoirs they used the natural means at their disposal. The Christian recognises inspiration again in the intuition of the Church, in separating

these books from other contemporary records, handing down these, and these only, as setting forth the faith once delivered to the saints. But even if we had to give up all thought of the overruling influence of God's Holy Spirit (and in argument with unbelievers we are compelled to treat the Christian documents as any other literature), Christianity would still stand. It stood in the first century, before the canon of the New Testament was formed, and it can stand in the twentieth century, even though the Gospels were proved to have no more than human authority. The historical fact will still remain that the first propagators of Christianity had something to proclaim which proved itself of marvellous power to overcome the world, and no other explanation of their power is suggested or alleged save that which our sacred books afford. We do not base our argument for Christianity first upon the sacred books, but we base it upon admitted facts of history which the sacred books can alone account for.

What, then, *was* the original Gospel of power which overran the world with such astonishing success? The precise answer

can only be found in the Christian literature, and, however much the testimony of that literature be discounted by criticism, its general tenor and effect remain undisputed.

“Christian literature” we say. For it is thus that we regard the New Testament, not as a collection of legal documents in which every word has an equal title to be construed as it stands without regard to external circumstances, but as a literature comprising works of different character by various authors, in the interpretation of which we must take account of the position and point of view of each writer ; a literature, however, homogeneous in this respect, that all its parts were produced under the influence of the convictions which possessed the first followers of Christ ; a literature, therefore, which reveals what those convictions were, as infallibly as the Elizabethan literature reflects the beliefs of the Elizabethan age. The New Testament is, in fact, the literature of that Revelation which we believe God gave to the world in Jesus Christ, just as the Old Testament is the literature of earlier revelations.

The earliest Christian writings which

remain to us in their original form are the Epistles of St. Paul, of the genuineness of most of which no one has any doubt. Even those persons who deny effective inspiration will admit these Epistles as evidence of what St. Paul thought (rightly or wrongly) about Christianity.

In his view the Gospel was the power of God unto salvation, and its message embraced at least these three points :

1. The supernatural personality of Christ as the Son of God.
2. The fact of the Resurrection.
3. Salvation, or the forgiveness of sins in the Name and power of Christ.

The Acts of the Apostles is a book of later date, but at least it is evidence of what Christianity was thought to be at the time when it was written. It represents the preaching of the first disciples as embodying the three points which we have named—the Divine Sonship of Christ, the fact that He rose from the dead, and the promise of forgiveness through Him.

The preaching of Christianity was thus essentially the preaching of Christ. Because He was the Son of God His words had

Divine authority. His resurrection opened a new prospect of eternity, and men conscious of their own failures and sins found hope in Him as the Saviour.

Every saying of His was, therefore, precious, and every act was to be treasured as a revelation of the Divine character. Doubtless every Christian who could write made his own memoir of all that he was told of Jesus—his own collection of the sayings of Jesus. These earlier memoirs, however, have not come down to us, except so far as they are incorporated in our four canonical Gospels.

These four were accepted by common consent, by the voice of the Church, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit (as we believe); accepted and handed down to future generations as embodying the faith once delivered to the saints.

But it is probable that the earliest of these Gospels was not written until some thirty-five years after the Crucifixion. And though we believe the author to have been moved by the Holy Ghost to undertake his work, and though we rely on the Divine guidance in his presentation of the Gospel of Christ,

we do not regard him as an infallible annalist.

He had to use the materials that came to his hand, he had to piece them together with such skill as he possessed, and to reconcile as best he might the discrepancies of existing documents.

However well he did his work, we need not be surprised if details are out of place. We are quite prepared to find in his records such inaccuracies as Mr. Mallock refers to. Yet we are not disquieted. We welcome the assistance of scholarship, criticism, and of common-sense, yet we continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which we have received.

IV.

THE LAW OF THE WAGER.

Preached at St. Mary the Great, Cambridge, Nov. 24th, 1895.

ALL things are lawful for me but I will not be brought under the power of any.

I Cor. vi. 12.

ONE of the most baneful passions that possess men and women at the present day is the passion for gambling. I do not suppose that there has ever been a time in which the indulgence of this passion has taken so evil a form and has been so widely prevalent as in our own generation.

In the last century gambling was carried on amongst the higher classes for stakes almost incredible in magnitude. Fortunes were lost and won in a single night. Yet the gambling of that generation was of a less illegitimate kind than that which prevails in the present day, and it appears to have been practised only by a small section of the

community, chiefly by the wealthy and leisured classes.

In the present day it is the vice of the masses. No one can doubt this if he note the large space which is occupied in the daily newspapers with information of interest only to gamblers. The editors of the papers doubtless meet the demands of their readers ; and the columns of so-called sporting intelligence, much of which is simply a table of bets offered or taken, afford a testimony not to be gainsaid. Further, there are numerous papers regularly published which exist solely and entirely for the guidance or misguidance of gamblers ; and the fact that such papers are a valuable property offers the strongest proof of the wide prevalence of the passion of which I speak.

I.

But is it always wrong to make a bet or to risk a small stake on the chance of winning more ? I do not say that it is always wrong : I do not endorse that sentence of wholesale condemnation which, if logically applied, would forbid every kind of speculative venture and would make it sinful to pay an

entrance fee for an athletic contest, or to buy a commodity in the hope of its rising in value, or even to insure one's house against fire.

I shall presently lay down a rule to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate ventures: but I would first point out that even legitimate ventures, if they are engaged in to such an excess that they become the indulgence of a passion, or if they so feed the passion that it become more exacting in its demands, so that there is danger that it shall possess and dominate the man, become, by want of restraint, positively sinful. Even the hazards that seem to be the most clearly legitimate must be subjected to St. Paul's rule, "All things are lawful for me but I will not be brought under the power of any."

II.

The craving for excitement grows upon a man by indulgence, and if no restraint be exercised, it will in time overmaster the man and bring him into a condition in which he may be said to be possessed by a devil.

This is true of almost any kind of excitement. Passion unrestrained masters the man. We know how true it is in the craving

of that excitement which comes of intoxication: the drunkard has lost command of himself, he is possessed by his own peculiar devil. Lewis Morris has told how the same thing happens when the love of power unrestrained develops into a very passion of cruelty. He describes the man

“Who only cared for power, content to shed
Rivers of innocent blood, if only thus
He might appease his thirst. Until he grew
A monster gloating over blood and pain.”¹

And many know by sad experience how some swift desire of sensual enjoyment waxes stronger and more strong, and feeding on itself grows tyrannous.

III.

In like manner does the passion for the excitement of gambling grow upon a man and possess him. If he lose his venture the warning is in vain, he is eager to recover his loss. If he win, the result is worse: he is never satisfied, his appetite is only whetted for further indulgence.

Therefore it is necessary for every good man to beware how he engage in ventures

¹ *The Epic of Hades*, ninth Edition, p. 12.

even of a character that may be thought legitimate. The keen interest with which one regards the fall of the dice, or the dealing of the cards, or the drawing of the lottery, or the issue of the risky speculation, is of the nature of an intoxication, and unless it be jealously guarded, and sternly limited, it may soon become a demon in possession, which can only be cast out after a terrible struggle by prayer and fasting.

IV.

On this account we ought to be on our guard as to how we allow our children to amuse themselves by games of chance, lest we should be educating in them a craving for that particular excitement which is found in awaiting the issue of a chance ; the danger may be present even though they play for no stakes. Their reward is only the satisfaction of success, but if the success is to be due not to skill but purely to chance, the interest which is being cultivated is of the same kind as that which intoxicates the gambler.

Games of skill may have their educational value, they show the child how much may depend upon the cultivation of a talent :

games of chess and draughts belong to this category : and in games of mingled skill and chance there is a certain educational power, teaching the child to be resourceful in varying conditions of prosperity and adversity. Moreover it may be that the genuine interest found in the exercise of skill may overpower the evil effects of the element of chance. This will especially be the case where the game is such that skill counts for more than chance, and the better player will generally win though the fortune of chance be against him. To this category belong the best of the games that are played with cards. But games of pure chance, unless used with great caution, are deadly in their influence. In such games there is no credit in winning ; there is absolutely no interest except that which in its developed form becomes the passion of the gambler. Hence you will find that a game of pure chance is not long played without the desire to stimulate the flagging interest by money stakes.

v.

The right or wrong of a wager cannot depend upon the language in which the

bargain is expressed. If I pay a premium of £1 to ensure my house against fire for £1000, I am in fact making a bet with the Insurance Company, I am taking the odds of 999 to 1 that my house will not be burned down within a year. It is impossible to say that the insurance is right and the bet wrong, seeing that the transaction is one and the same, though it be described in two systems of language. So if a man buy property hoping to sell it at a profit he is putting himself into the same position as though he were to bet upon the event of a rise in its value. When, therefore, I speak of a wager I include in the term not only formal betting, but such other ventures as playing games for money, joining in lotteries or raffles, depositing stakes or paying entrance fees for athletic contests or other competitions, buying a commodity in hope of a rise in its value, I include, in fact, every transaction in which a sum of money is staked with the risk of loss but with the hope of gain; the issue depending upon an uncertain event over which the person who lays the stake has no control or only a limited control insufficient to determine the event.

VI.

It is, however, only when this transaction is carried out on an excessively large scale that the term "gambling" is applied to it. This term is used as one of reproach: but in many cases such ventures as I speak of are held to be praiseworthy. Such ventures are habitual in commerce, and are uncondemned unless the risks involved are marked by a very high degree of uncertainty. In this case it is termed speculation; but commercial speculation is only condemned in its excesses and when rashly engaged in. For speculation in its proper measure is the necessary condition of commerce. The man who buys a commodity on the expectation of selling it at a higher price is not to be charged with sin.

If, then, commercial ventures are right, why are those other ventures wrong which are called gambling? There is this distinction that, though the commercial venture may be as hazardous as the wager, the former is generally of benefit to the community, its success depending upon the bringing of the supply of a commodity to the point at which the demand for it is greatest.

The energy spent in gambling is altogether lost to the world. It does not tend to bring bread to the famine-stricken, or clothing to those who are waiting to purchase it. It does nothing for the world; it is energy lost, dissipated, wasted. Nay, worse than this, for it is easily demonstrated that the tendency of gambling is always to aggravate the evil of our social inequalities. Its tendency is to aggregate money in fewer and fewer hands, to make some rich richer and many poor poorer.

VII.

If it can ever be right to be party to a wager, the first condition is that the wager must be a fair one; and it can not be fair unless each party has the same knowledge of the contingent circumstances. If the wager is fair, neither party has ground to expect any ultimate advantage. But expectation is based upon knowledge, and if *one* has a knowledge of facts of which the other is ignorant, the equation of their expectations is altogether fallacious. If two gamesters are playing with loaded dice and neither of them knows that the dice are loaded they

may lay an honest wager as to the faces that shall turn up at any throw. Or, if both of them are aware that the dice are loaded, again an honest wager may be laid: but if one gamester is ignorant of the fact while the other is aware of it, an honest wager is impossible. You may lay a wager perhaps even innocently while you are backing your own skill or your own judgment; but if you base it on your own private information or on knowledge which you possess, and which the other party does not possess, the transaction is as immoral as if you sold an article which you knew to be damaged, and concealed the flaw from the purchaser, or as if you took advantage of your neighbour's ignorance, and bought from him for a few pence that which you knew to be worth in the market so many pounds.

VIII.

The wrong is, of course, all the greater if you have deliberately kept your neighbour in ignorance that you may trade on his ignorance in buying or selling, or in some sort of wager. Hardly a meaner sin can be conceived than that a player should deliberately

conceal his skill, in order that some incautious youth may engage with him on unequal terms. But even though our neighbour's ignorance be not due to any concealment on our part, high principle forbids us to take advantage of it. When an elder boy sells a damaged plaything to his young companion at twice the price which it cost when new, or when he buys from the little boy a coveted possession for one tenth of its proper value, even though no coercion were used, nor the terror of *force majeure*, we can hardly find words strong enough to brand the action.

It is despicable to trade upon our brother's ignorance, either in buying or selling or wagering, and that is why I think the gambling of the present day far less legitimate in its character than that which prevailed in the last century.

When statesmen played at cards and lost or gained a fortune at a sitting, they were at least honest gamesters. They staked their skill and the chances of their cards, but they did not fancy themselves possessed of some private information on which to base a wager to the detriment of their neighbour.

IX.

But in our day that system of gambling to which the masses are most addicted seems to be carried on altogether on the supposition that information about the competitors in a race may be privately acquired, and on such information bets may be made. If the information be genuine and true, the gamester has no more right to wager upon it than he has to play with cogged dice when his neighbour does not know that they are loaded. Probably the information on which the stupid young man relies is not worth the paper on which it is written, but as he thinks it to be genuine his moral position is the same as if it were genuine.

In dealing with this subject from the pulpit most preachers seem to think it sufficient to declaim in general terms against the sin of gambling without any attempt to analyse it, or to determine the point at which the sinfulness begins. But I am convinced that if men knew more of the principles of chance, and of the conditions of gambling, they would gamble much less. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."¹

¹ Proverbs i. 17.

Any mathematician glancing at the odds published in the newspapers in regard to any race, perceives that they are always so conditioned as to give a very considerable advantage to the bookmaker who bets against all the horses, to the disadvantage of the public who back the several horses. If the odds are fair, the respective chances of the several horses ought to add up to unity. If they add up to more than unity it is so much to the advantage of the bookmaker. I have never examined a case in which I did not find this inequality. On a recent occasion, when I had to speak on this subject, I turned at random to the first race for which the odds were advertised in the *Morning Post*. I found that there was an advantage of no less than 40 per cent. to the bookmaker. That is to say, the backers of the horses for the Ellesmere Handicap were in precisely as unfavourable a position as you would be in if you gave the odds 7 to 5 that a coin would fall with a certain face upwards.

It is said that there is less professional betting on the University Boat-race than on any other race in the year. The reason is perfectly clear. It is not, as is often alleged,

because the race is certain to be rowed fairly. If this were the reason it would imply that those who bet on other races rely on their being run unfairly. I should be sorry to utter such a libel. The reason is plainly this, that when there are only two competitors it is impossible to make a book or to arrange the odds to the bookmaker's advantage without the merest tyro seeing through the expedient. If bookmakers invited the public to back Oxford at 5 to 4, and to back Cambridge at 4 to 3 every one would see the inequality. They would say at once if the odds on Oxford are 5 to 4, the odds on Cambridge must be 4 to 5.

But the inequality which is obvious in the case of two competitors is easily disguised when three or more compete. As a matter of fact, as far as my examination goes, the inequality always exists in the published odds on any race, and if men had but the knowledge to read aright the wagers that are offered them, they would be as unwilling to enter into them as they would be to play pitch and toss at odds 20 or 30 or 40 per cent. against them.

X.

But I undertook to lay down a rule whereby to distinguish the legitimate from the illegitimate wager. The rule is a very simple one. If you will think, you will see that in every venture of the kind which we have named a man is relying on one of three things : either (1) on his knowledge, *i.e.* on some information which he thinks he has and the other party has not ; or (2) on his skill—it may be physical skill, as in an athletic contest, or it may be mental skill or good judgment, as in intellectual games or in commercial speculations ; or (3) he may rely simply upon his good luck as in a game of chance into which no skill enters. To use the language of the gamester, he is backing either his knowledge or his skill, or his luck.

Now I say that for a man to back his knowledge, or to base a wager on private information, is always immoral.

To back his skill is generally legitimate, only he must exercise moderation and not risk more than he can afford to lose.

To back his luck on unfair terms is of

course immoral, and on fair terms it is foolish even if it be not positively profane.

XI.

Before I proceed to illustrate these statements it may be well to mention a valid ground of exception. There are cases in which the undertaking of a new risk lessens an already existing risk. As an extreme example: if a man has purchased a ticket in a raffle he has thereby entered into a wager: he may gain the prize, or he may lose his stake; but if he now proceed to purchase all the other tickets the element of chance is entirely eliminated. He has probably made a very bad bargain, but he has paid a known sum for a specific commodity, and he has run no risk. The buying up of all the tickets is not a speculation or a venture. So when a gamester finds himself involved to a dangerous extent in a risk he "hedges," that is, he makes some new bets which have a tendency to diminish his possible loss, or to substitute for a single chance of a large gain or loss the larger chance of a more moderate gain or loss. So when a man insures his property against

fire he is really hedging against a serious risk: and the business of the Insurance Company is analogous to the buying up of the tickets in the raffle. We perceive here the wisdom of the rule that a man may not effect an insurance on a property unless he has "insurable interest" in it. If, as a mere speculation, I were to pay a premium of £1 on the condition that I receive £1000 if my neighbour's property is burnt down within a year I am simply gambling. There is no existing risk against which I am hedging: but if the property is my own I am not creating a risk, but limiting one. The transaction is still a wager, but it is the reverse of a venture.

XII.

Leaving aside this ground of exception, I submit the following cases as illustrative of the principle that within the limits of moderation it is

- (i.) Immoral to back one's private knowledge.
- (ii.) Justifiable to back one's skill.
- (iii.) Foolish to back one's luck.

A and *B* are fishing. *A* bets that he will land a fish before *B*.

If it be a trial of skill there is nothing wrong in the bet. If it be a mere matter of chance the bet is foolish ; but if *A* sees that he has got a bite (without *B* perceiving it) the bet is immoral.

C and *D* play a game for money. If the stakes are small and it is a mere pastime, *de minimis non curat lex* ; but if they engage in the game with the serious desire of making money, then, if it be a game of pure chance, the proceeding is egregiously foolish : if it be a game of mingled chance and skill the proceeding is defensible in measure, according to the preponderance of the element of skill over the element of chance.

E takes odds that he will throw sixes with a pair of dice. He backs his luck, which is foolish.

F takes the same odds, having private information that the dice are loaded. He backs his knowledge, which is fraudulent.

G, having seen the two crews at practice, bets that Oxford will win.

H makes the same bet, having received private information that the Cambridge stroke is ill. The one backs his judgment,

which is justifiable, the other backs his knowledge, which is immoral.

K, with seven others, pays half-a-crown for a ticket in a raffle for an object worth a sovereign.

L, with seven others, pays half-a-crown entrance fee in an athletic contest for a prize worth a sovereign.

K is backing his luck, *L* his skill, otherwise the terms are the same.

B gives £50 for a field, whose agricultural value is £40, because he thinks events will happen to make it of value for building. The transaction is precisely the same as though the extra £10 were staked in a bet upon the event; but the transaction is justifiable because he is backing his judgment.

M bets that he will jump further than *N*. He is backing his skill, and the action is justifiable.

XIII.

It is not always easy to apply these rules, simple as they are, for it is difficult to draw a sharp line of demarcation between knowledge and skill. The difficulty exists quite

apart from any theory of gambling as I will shew by an example.

I notice on a bookstall an old volume, marked "one shilling": I know that the volume is a rare one and that it is worth a guinea. Am I justified in proffering the shilling and carrying off the book? I have put this question of casuistry to many persons, and have received different answers. Some are certain that I am justified morally as well as legally in taking the book at the price which the vendor puts upon it. Others are equally sure that I should be taking an unfair advantage of the bookseller: but on investigation it appears that these two views diverge upon the simple question whether knowledge or skill be at issue. Everyone is agreed that I should have no right to trade upon the ignorance of a private friend and buy from him for a shilling the book that I know to be worth a guinea. I should be taking a mean advantage of my superior knowledge: but when I deal with the bookseller it is argued that I am dealing with him as with an expert in books. His professional skill is exercised in the valuing of books, and if

I pit my skill against his in trading with him I am entitled to any advantage I can secure. I am not endorsing this view, I am only concerned to point out that if a transaction of this kind is justified at all, it is justified on the ground that the conflict was not between knowledge and ignorance, but between skill and skill.

XIV.

In conclusion I venture to explain why wagers of the third class seem to verge upon the profane.

The case supposed is, that two men are playing at the proper mathematical odds, a game, the issue of which depends purely on chance; no element of skill is involved in it. It may be that they are casting a die, and at every throw one player gives the other the odds of 5 to 1 that the ace will not turn up. Or it may be they are playing with coins, such a simple game as "odd or even," playing on equal terms. With what expectation does a man engage in such play. He knows that if he plays it all his life it is an even chance whether he or his adversary have the advantage.

To what purpose then is all this time and energy devoted? The secret is that the man thinks he may have good luck and so win.

Now what does luck mean? To those who believe that when "the lot is cast into the lap, the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord,"¹ luck can only be another name for Providence. If there be such a power as Providence, to rely upon one's luck is to trust that God will favour us at the expense of our opponent. Unwarranted appeals to God are profane.

And this leads me to speak of a practice to which some seem much addicted, the practice of settling by lot or chance some question of conduct on which we ought to exercise the judgment with which God has endowed us.

We are to be led by the Spirit of God, and in every doubt or difficulty we are to look to God for guidance. But He has appointed the ways by which we are to learn His will—by the study of His law, by the words of those whom He has called to be our spiritual guides, by the secret

¹ Proverbs xvi. 33.

voice of conscience after earnest prayer for enlightenment.

These means we are to use, interpreting by the reason which He has given to us the answers thus suggested.

But if we try to force an answer out of God by unauthorised means we commit sin; the sin which Saul committed when he had recourse to the witch of Endor; the sin which is so constantly condemned in the Old Testament. As rational men we have no right to be governed by augury. We have no right even to think that we may force an answer from God by the random opening of the Bible, by those "*sortes quas sanctorum vocant, vel quas de ligno aut de pane faciunt.*" As we have to worship God in the way of His own appointment and not by superstitious modes, so we have to learn His will by the means which He has ordained, and the unwarranted appeal to His Providence is as sinful as a profane oath.

God of His mercy save us from the demon of covetousness, who would have us make haste to be rich. God save us also from possession by that other demon

which intoxicates us, not perhaps with greed, but with a passion for excitement, which is only satisfied, even so not finally satisfied, by winning. God give us grace to do our duty in the world, labouring honestly to get our own living in the state, whatever it may be, to which He may call us. God give us the ready ear of faith to hear His voice in the utterance of the Holy Spirit, and to find enlightenment in the means of grace which He has appointed for us in the Church of Jesus Christ.

V.

POLITICAL DUTY.

Preached at St. Paul's Cathedral, Sept. 30th, 1900.

THERE was a little city and few men within it, and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city : yet no man remembered that same poor man.

Ecclesiastes ix. 14, 15.

Is this a story or a history? Fiction with a moral or true history with a moral? It matters little, for in either case the moral is the same; and the narrative, whether historical or not, only serves to convey and to accentuate the moral.

A story with a moral, so I read it; not an allegory of the assaults of Satan upon the soul, not a parable with a hidden meaning altogether spiritual, but a plain and simple story (historical or not) teaching us the importance of individual effort, and the true dignity of work, if only the work be done,

not for fame or applause, but in the simple discharge of duty.

I.

The hero of the story is a humble citizen, in a beleaguered city. He is endowed with the *true* humility, that gapes not for honour or reward. He is quite free from the false humility which holds a man back from action because his individual work seems of little account. He is a wise man, and whatever his wisdom be he holds it at the service of the community. He does not stand aloof as though the political crisis concerned him not. He does not keep his thoughts to himself, and refuse to discuss the policy of his rulers, as though his voice would count for nothing in forming public opinion; and presently the very existence of the State turns upon the wisdom of this poor man. We know not what the circumstances were. Perhaps his plan of wisdom, quietly suggested, was passed from mouth to mouth till none knew with whom it had originated. It may be that in quickness of thought he perceived a danger, and, without the hesitation of false humility, pointed it out to those in authority.

It may be that he conceived a way of deliverance, and persistently pressed it on public attention, until its adoption was crowned with success. Or, in some moment of surprise perhaps, everything depended on his discretion, and his presence of mind: or, did all turn on some single act of bravery that none remained to tell of, for, perchance, he perished himself in the doing of it. Anyway no man remembered that same poor man.

II.

Then said the preacher, "Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard": not heard at the tribunal of fame, where the palm of popular applause is awarded to the chief among fools: not heard amidst the noisy clamours of those who compete for the favours of the multitude: but "the words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools."

Virtue seeks the true glory of being and doing, not the false halo of appearing to be, and of seeming to do.

III.

“No man remembered that same poor man.” That is the point of the story. If he had been remembered then we should say he had his reward. If he had done his good work for the sake of being remembered he should have had the tinsel crown : but no one knows his name and none can tell his works. His is the crown of the finest gold, the diadem of brilliants of the first water. You know the English warrior who staked his reputation and his life on the issue of the day, exclaiming, “To-day shall win me a peerage or Westminster Abbey !” Nobler the poor man who saved his city ; but found neither earthly dignity, nor an honoured grave, for no man remembered that same poor man.

IV.

The first lesson then that we learn from this story is, that we must do all the good we can without stopping to think whether people will applaud us or not. The greatest man, morally, is he who does his duty as a matter of course, not merely without display, not merely without the anxious

consideration of how others will regard and judge his actions, but even without self-consciousness. I mean that he will not stop to say to himself, "This is a great action, and therefore I will do it." He does not need to incite himself to the heroic performance by the reflection I must do this because it is duty, and I desire to do my duty even if it involve a very martyrdom. He does not need to argue with himself, "I will rise above the levels of popular applause and do that which is truly noble, I shall get no immediate credit for it, but God and my conscience will be my reward." No, he is a noble man who can argue thus, but not the noblest. The noblest, morally, is surely he who, when he knows his duty, hesitates not, argues not, thinks not, but, does it. He does right because it is right, without the self-consciousness of even thinking why he does it.

v.

Yet are there not some of you who disparage yourselves for your very virtue in this respect? Sometimes a man will plead, I am not living in any sin, and I do not know that

I am neglecting any duty : but I am afraid I am doing nothing for love of God. If I do right I do it as a matter of course and never think about pleasing God in doing it. My reply invariably is, If you are doing good for the love of good, what is this but doing it for the love of God? If you are so filled with the mind of Christ that the very things Christ would have you do are the things which instinctively you do, then thank God for it. If the spirit of God has so possessed you that your will is in complete accord with the will of God—or so that at least you are conscious of no will within you that would oppose the will of God, then indeed it seems to me that you have arrived at a state of blessedness which many reputed saints have failed to reach.

While much is said in these days about the danger of thinking wrongly and acting wrongly, there presses upon us the much greater danger of not thinking at all and not acting at all. Too often in our city the poor wise man holds aloof. He does not deliver the city when he might.

VI.

Possibly he deems his own influence too slight to avail. The problems of the day are beyond him, the complicated problems it may be of our modern social life. There are evils for which he sees no remedy and he is tempted to say, *Laissez faire*, it cannot be helped.

And yet we have a faith in Christ that every evil can be met—whether social or spiritual, if only each man will recognise his responsibility and do his own part. Let each do with his might what his hand findeth to do, and then, among the humblest and the simplest, may the poor wise man be found who by his wisdom delivers the city.

Is not the Gospel story of the unprofitable servant continually repeating itself? Is there not a modern type of the unprofitable servant who wraps his Lord's talent in a napkin and buries it in the ground, when he ought to be employing it as a sacred trust? What did the unprofitable servant mean by his complaint to the Master, "I knew thee that thou wert an austere man, reaping where thou hadst not sowed and gathering where thou hadst not strawed"? He meant just

what every one else means who does not care to do his work or use his talent when the profit would not be to his own personal advantage, when it would only be for the elevation of humanity and the glory of God. Why should I trouble myself says the unprofitable servant to apply my wisdom, to use my influence, to give my vote, when the question at stake does not touch my personal interests? Even if by my wisdom I were to deliver the city, no one would remember me, nor give me the credit of it. Society is an austere man ; even if by my voice I benefit the community I shall reap no advantage from it. Humanity may reap the advantage but not I. God's glory in the welfare of man may be promoted but not my glory. I will take my ease, eat, drink, and die, whether the commonwealth be overthrown or the heavens fall.

VII.

Such a contrast we do very commonly witness in modern life to the nobility of the unknown hero in the passage before us. Oh that it might be said more often among ourselves, there was found in the city a poor

wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city ; yet no man remembered that same poor man. We are called from time to time to discharge a trust, a duty which God lays upon us as members of a civilised community. Each individual seems to count for very little ; for no more than the poor wise man in the midst of the city ; yet the votes of individuals will make up the utterance of the Nation's voice, and upon that utterance mighty issues are depending. No man may say that his own vote counts for so little that he may be excused from exercising it ; for be our opportunities great or small we shall answer to God for the use which we make of them. One man's vote is worth as much as another's, and I suppose there never has been a general election in England in which the unrecorded votes were not sufficient, had they been so cast, to reverse the whole policy of the country. The unprofitable servants who have the franchise but wrap it in a napkin and bury it in the earth are always numerous enough to change the whole course of our social and political history.

VIII.

God has given us talents many and various, time and money, voice and vote, and we acknowledge that, in all things which we possess, we are His stewards, and shall have to give account of our stewardship : but if we are answerable before God for the use which we make of our money, shall we not be equally answerable for the use which we make of our political franchise. If for every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account before God, shall they not much more give account of the voice by which they influenced the counsels of the nation ; how much more still for their guilty silence, if they refuse to utter that voice, to give the vote by which the city might have been delivered.

IX.

If indeed there be a man who deems himself too ignorant to be worthy of the franchise, so unintelligent as to be unable to form any judgment on the questions of the day, he may properly abstain from giving any vote, alleging sheer incapacity. He may pass the sentence of stupidity upon

himself: but this is not the judgment men commonly pronounce upon themselves. Each one in his own way is the wise man. Each one in his own intelligence and in his own conscience adopts what seems to him to be the wise policy. Whether it be absolutely wise or not does not affect his duty. According to his conscience it is wise, and according to his conscience he exercises his own wisdom for the good of the community. The poor wise man according to his conscience must do his part to deliver the city.

In the wisdom which God has dispensed to us we may differ in our views of Imperial policy. It is not the part of the preacher to tell you how to vote, but it is his part to set before you the duty of voting conscientiously, guided not by considerations of personal advantage, but by regard for the welfare of the community. Some may think there is wisdom in the decentralisation of power, some in the strengthening of central authority. Some may wish to see abuses remedied in a spirit conservative of every noble tradition, while others may regard the ancient institutions of the country

as altogether out of date, no longer capable of being adapted to modern needs, but like a dead tree, fit only to be torn up by the roots.

X.

But whatever be your wisdom let the State have the benefit of it : whatever seem to you the wise policy, support it : and yours it may be to share the glory of the poor wise man in the text who by his wisdom delivered the city.

Only be patriots. In a large and catholic spirit promote the interests of your country. Let it not be said, at least with any truth, that the upper classes are roused only when the privileges of the aristocracy are in question : that the clergy are alert only when the rights of their own order are threatened, and that the working men care for nothing but the class interests of their own kind. Be patriots. Seek that justice be done between nation and nation, and righteousness between man and man. No good cause needs to be supported by wrong and robbery. Least of all can the cause of our great Lord be furthered by political

or social injustice. Some would bid us put Church before party in the exercise of the suffrage: but, if this means that we are to have no regard for social righteousness or for political justice, that we are to ignore our civil responsibilities, and sacrifice the principles of right for the sake of our Ecclesiastical system, then it is an unholy counsel. To follow it would be to stretch out the hand of Uzzah to steady the Ark of God. Let right prevail. Right, whatever it may cost. Right, between the oppressor and the oppressed. Right, between nation and nation, between party and party, between class and class. Right, though it cost us blood. Right, though it cripple our commerce. Right, though it wound our pride. Right! It can never lower our honour or degrade our name. For "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

XI.

Yet remember that it is not only in the exercise of your civil franchise that you have to take a side and cast a vote. Your vote and interest are demanded day by day to

lower or to raise the moral tone of society around you. You may vote with the fools who make a mock at sin. You may swell the unholy cry of those who declare that the grossest vices are a necessary consequence of the present conditions of our civilisation, who find excuse for the greed, the licentiousness and the cruelty of the day. Or, on the other hand, by your consistent life and conversation, by the bold reproof, or even by the silent censure of vice, by the discipline of your life and the restraint of your words, you may strengthen the side of those who believe in the power of the Holy Ghost to sanctify ; of those who will not tolerate evil that good may come, nor sin on the plea of necessity ; of those who feel that England can only be great if England is holy and honest and pure, who demand for themselves and for their fellow-countrymen that England must be free, and therefore Englishmen never the slaves of vice ; of those who hold the truth, for nations as for individuals, of our Lord's own promise that "all things are possible unto him that believeth."

XII.

Moreover, you have to take a side in the contest that is being carried on over the souls of those around you. The powers of good and of evil are striving together. The Sanctifier and the Tempter are at war for the possession of each individual soul; and both parties solicit your aid in the contest. You cannot stand aloof even if you would. Your influence is so ethereal that it cannot be buried in the earth. If it be not an influence for good it will be an influence for evil; for in this matter Christ's own words may be applied: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." Disparage not, then, your influence. Though you seem to yourself little and insignificant, yet emulate the poor wise man who by his wisdom delivered the city.

Only one word more. Amongst the souls for which Satan is striving against God, my brother, there is your own. Satan desires to have you: and the Spirit of God jealously yearneth for you. Many powers are ranged on both sides, and mighty influences are engaged to gain the seat of your heart for

God or Devil ; but the casting vote is in your own hands. All depends upon your own poor weak will. Give it to God, and He is yours, and you are His ; or, rebel against Him, and you set Satan on the throne to rule you.

I speak as the Minister of Christ, to claim that throne for Him. You are His by every right : by creation, by redemption, by the gift of the Holy Ghost. I call upon you now, by an act of self-surrender, to accept His loving rule. Long ago He has chosen you, He waits now for you to choose Him. Oh, give your voice for Jesus only.

VI.

THE STATE AND ITS CHILDREN.

Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, June 4th, 1899.

AT his gate.

St. Luke xvi. 20.

IT is the propinquity of wealth and indigence that makes the contrast in this parable so striking.

Dives and Lazarus breathed the same air, spoke the same language, lived under the same government, were loyal to the same Fatherland, professed the same religion, worshipped the same God : but the one was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day ; whilst the other was a beggar, full of sores, craving to be fed with the superfluous and unheeded crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

If Dives was moved by any spirit of patriotism, devoted to his country and eager for his country's welfare, Lazarus at least

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constituted a unit in the national life—part and parcel of the country which Dives loved.

If Dives was moved by any religious zeal, earnest to fulfil the will of the good God and Father of all, Lazarus was at least one of the children of that same Father, a fellow churchman with Dives, and his brother in their common faith, yet the one was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day; whilst the beggar full of sores lay at his gate desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from Dives' table.

There are warnings here for individuals; there are much plainer lessons for nations and for civil communities.

I.

The individual is warned against the temptations of an indulgent life. The purple and fine linen may be allowed him, but he must not forget that there are naked brethren to be clothed. He may fare sumptuously now and then without sin; but if he fare sumptuously every day, with never a season of fasting and abstinence, the animal side of his nature is glutted at the expense of the spiritual; life is undisciplined, sensuality

reigns, and there is no heart for God or fellow-man. The result is that which God by the prophet Ezekiel defines as the fate of Sodom.¹ "Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."

II.

Dives is not condemned for being rich: but for his indifference towards the poor and indigent. St. Augustine puts this very strongly. He says, "If thou wouldest hear the crime of that rich man, seek no further than thou hearest from the Truth. He was rich: he was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. What then was his crime? *A man full of sores lying before his gate and not helped.* For this is expressly said of him that he was unmerciful: for if that poor man lying before the gate had received of the rich man sufficiency of food, would it be said of him that he desired the crumbs? Because of this inhumanity only, whereby he disregarded

¹ xvi. 49.

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the poor man lying before his gate and did not feed him suitably and meetly he died and was buried, and in the torments of hell he lifted up his eyes and saw the poor man in Abraham's bosom." So St. Augustine. To his mind the inequalities of wealth do not constitute an injustice any more than inequalities of intellect or bodily strength. Men are not condemned for being rich : but they are condemned for the inconsiderate and selfish use of their wealth, and for the want of an adequate sense of the responsibility which it entails.

III.

The attempt to deduce from the parable literal rules to guide an individual in the duty of charity has led to difficulties. If one of the rich men of London were to establish the practice of giving a sovereign to every indigent or sore-stricken beggar who placed himself upon his door-step, no one can suppose that the consequences of his generosity would be of any advantage to the community, or that they would constitute a fulfilment of the law of Christ. The imagery of the parable implies a state of society in

which the relation of classes was very simple, and Dives had the means of knowing all the circumstances of Lazarus. But even then there is no hint that Dives ought to have divested himself of his wealth, or shared it equally with the beggar. Unless a state of absolute socialism be established—and the objections to such a system have never been answered—it appears to be a condition of civil society, that there be diversities of gifts, intellectual, physical, and material. At the same time the greatest happiness of the greatest number is attained by the avoidance of all extremes. There is a fault in the social system that tends to create a few millionaires whilst masses are submerged in penury.

Hence we raise our voice against gambling¹ and excessive speculation. The moral evil of gambling is being more fully exhibited every day: but beside the moral evil, gambling is a great social evil, as its ultimate effect is mathematically demonstrated to be this—to make a few rich richer, and to make many poor, poorer.

¹ See Sermon IV.

IV.

If there are difficulties in applying the teachings of the parable as rules of conduct for the individual, there are no such difficulties when we study their application to a civil community.

I take Dives in his mansion and Lazarus at his gate as representing a state of civilised society in which at one end of the scale there is sumptuous and excessive luxury, whilst at the other end there are masses who have no means of earning their daily bread.

I put aside every thought of charity and beneficence: I speak only of justice and righteousness.

Charity abounds: charity organised and disorganised: charity prodigal in its goodness of heart, but yet foolish in its measures: charity competing with charity: charity lavish in its costly methods yet failing to fulfil its purpose: charity self-willed and thoughtless, tending to create the pauperism which it seeks to relieve; yet charity in spite of its own follies achieving some magnificent successes, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, teaching the ignorant, healing

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the sick, and in a moral sense cleansing the leper and casting out devils. I do not forget the good deeds of charity when I speak not of charity but of justice. After all, charity can only reach some: I crave a justice that should deal with all.

v.

Modern civilisation is a great power. But is modern civilisation always just?

We boast ourselves in our English name and claim that no nation upon earth excels us in an enlightened civilisation. And in the term civilisation we include all the principles by which our social life is governed, the influences by which each member of Society receives some impress from the whole: we include the institutions by which life and property are said to be more secure in England than anywhere else in the world. We include education—literary, scientific, or technical, and all that conduces to make the English workman the most efficient workman on earth. In virtue of our civilisation noble careers are open to our sons, and to some of them the opportunity of acquiring wealth. We congratulate ourselves somewhat smugly

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on our civilisation, calling upon less civilised nations to follow in our wake.

VI.

But there are some simple tests which an enlightened civilisation ought to satisfy. And perhaps the most simple and elementary is this: we should expect this at least in a civilised state, that opportunity be afforded to every member of the community to obtain for himself the necessaries of life. It is not enough that suitable openings are secured for the ablest and the best. It does not avail that new zones of influence are gained for our commerce, and new doors opened to the prosperity and advancement of our manufacturers and our merchants. The income tax returns may indicate a large increase in the wealth of the nation, but what boots it that Dives can be clothed in purple and fine linen, and can fare sumptuously every day, if Lazarus is still compelled to lie at his gate untended and unfed.

VII.

Our civilisation must be judged as a whole; our social system by its general results. If

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it promotes industry and activity; that is excellent. If it tend to develop the skilful hand; if it give scope for genius; if it lead every man to make the most of himself, of his powers, and opportunities; that is excellent. But the first and vital question is this—does it give every man—not the best, or the wisest, or the most active, but every man—an opportunity to obtain the necessities of life?

I am afraid that if we apply this test to ourselves as a civil community we stand condemned. Our national life seems to mean that Dives dwells in luxury and comfort while Lazarus lies at his gate.

A writer in yesterday's *Spectator* questions some of the inferences which Mr. Booth has drawn. But no one who has studied the facts which Mr. Booth has so laboriously brought together, can doubt that the competition of our present life, while it tends to the development of the fittest, condemns great masses of the community to a condition of indigence and dependence which no Christian man can regard without the deepest compunction.

VIII.

But if the evil which we deplore is the result of the system on which our social life is based, then its remedy is not a matter of charity but of justice.

What would you think of the father of a family who gave to some of his children the fullest opportunity to rise to a noble walk in life, at the expense of their brothers who obtained no means of livelihood. The correction of the inequality would not be charity but justice.

Our civil community is but a family on a large scale. And if the arrangements of this family are such that the advantage of some is purchased only at the price of others being submerged in indigence, then justice requires that some remedy should be found.

IX.

It is on this account that we look with interest on the proposal to establish a system of old-age pensions, regarding such pensions not as a charity but as a just compensation to Lazarus for the inevitable disadvantage under which he has been placed by the conditions of our social life.

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I am aware of the great difficulties which face those who advocate such a measure, but I cannot believe that they are insuperable. It does not belong to my office to enter into details of any scheme, but I venture to submit to you one or two considerations on the subject.

I. The pensions must not be a reward for merit. Even if it can be shewn that a man's penury is due to his own fault, still we are not to let him starve.

II. The pensions must be clearly understood to constitute an honourable provision which a man may accept without forfeiting his sense of independence and self-reliance: which he may accept as we all accept the benefits which are secured to us by an enlightened civilisation.

III. The pensions must be universal and not dependent on the measure of a man's indigence. We must not discourage thrift. The man who has made some provision for old age must be allowed to use it as a supplement to his pension when he reaches the age at which he is entitled to assistance.

Unless this condition is secured the old-age pension would be open to the objection of a

recent writer. It would discourage thrift, as the old system of out-door relief did. Under that system it was useless for a man to make any provision for old age, for such provision would be taken into account and deducted from the relief which he might otherwise receive. His savings did him no good. The effect would be quite the reverse if that which a man saved for old age served to give him some additional comfort beyond that which he had a right to draw from the State.

IV. Though the pension must not be withheld from a man because of his thriftless, or idle, or even criminal antecedents, there seems no reason why the misapplication of the pension, when once received, should not be made a misdemeanour at law, for which the appropriate penalty would be the temporary or permanent withdrawal of the pension.

V. Lastly, I would note that the mischiefs which many fear from the dislocation of our present system would be altogether averted if the change were introduced gradually. If next year we could establish pensions for all over 90 years of age, the experiment would

not cause a great disturbance. A simple machinery would suffice to work the system with such a limit of age, and as the machinery became more perfect by use it would be no difficult matter to reduce the age limit, step by step, as the operation of the scheme is observed.

X.

This, however, is not the place to discuss the working details of the scheme. My duty, at a time when the subject is largely occupying men's minds, is rather to suggest to you that such a measure as has been proposed would do something towards compensating Lazarus on grounds of simple justice for the disadvantages under which he lies. The question is one quite independent of party politics : it is one in which every Christian is bound to take an interest. Lazarus at our gate is the scandal of our modern civilisation. Lazarus at our gate appeals to our Christianity ; nay, not to the charity, but rather to the righteousness of Christ. But no individual effort can grapple with his case. If his evil condition be due to the inevitable working of our social system, our social

system alone can supply the remedy. But the impulse must come from the love and the righteousness which actuate us as the disciples of Christ.

XI.

I do not suppose that there is any one in this congregation who shuts up the bowels of his compassion against the poor. If you can only be sure of doing good, you are thankful for the opportunity of almsgiving. We have but to tell you that the sick and poor fund of the church is exhausted, and immediately all that we can want is in our hands. You are much more likely to err by thoughtless and indiscriminate charity than by any niggard refusal to give. There is no need that I should preach about Lazarus at the gate, as an appeal to you individually to be liberal in alms to the poor.

I am appealing rather to the influence which each one of you exerts as a citizen of no mean city. I ask you to consider measures that are now before the country, to consider them not as they affect party politics, but to regard them in the spirit of Christ, and to judge them in righteousness and justice.

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If our national prosperity is clothing Dives in purple and fine linen, enabling him to fare sumptuously every day, but if the very conditions of that prosperity are making life intolerable for Lazarus, then we must all hold up our hands in favour of any measure of readjustment.

Lazarus is our brother in the English name, in the greatness of England. Lazarus is our brother by baptism into the household of God, into the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and while the rich man is living in the splendid surroundings which we do not grudge him, Lazarus is lying at the gate full of sores, craving to be fed with such crumbs as fall from the rich man's table.

VII.

THE OPTIMISM OF PHILOSOPHY.

Preached at All Saints, Margaret Street, October 23rd, 1904.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ . . . hath begotten us
again unto a lively hope.

1 Peter i. 3.

A BOOK,¹ on the nature of man, has recently appeared which is said to mark the latest reach of science in the department of Biology.

I.

The author is a pure materialist. He has dissected human nature, and found no trace of an immortal soul in man. Therefore he concludes that there is no immortal soul. Sometimes he goes so far as to assert that the negative is proved, as when he writes, "science cannot admit the immortality of the conscious soul, for consciousness is a function of special elements in the body that certainly cannot live for ever." But there is a fallacy

¹ *The Nature of Man.* Studies in optimistic philosophy, Elie Metchnikoff.

here in the use of the word function. Let Y be a function of X . The author assumes that if X vanishes, Y must necessarily vanish: but we know that in algebraical functions this is not true. The author must define his terms, for he has not shewn us in what sense consciousness is a function of elements in the body. We admit that the Ego can have no consciousness of its material environment except by means of bodily organs. If these organs are destroyed, the Ego is no longer conscious in the sphere of the palpable universe: but is the consciousness itself destroyed, or only its means of operation in the world of our senses? We maintain that the author is begging the whole question when he assumes that because there is a functional relation between our consciousness and certain elements of our body, therefore our consciousness cannot survive the destruction of those elements. He says rightly enough that there is no scientific proof of immortality, but I affirm that there is no scientific disproof of it. It is outside the range of science; and outside her proper sphere, science is agnostic, science does not know.

II.

The author offers his work as "studies in optimistic philosophy": but he is an optimist only in the largeness of his faith and hope in that which science is to achieve. As to the present condition and constitution of man he is absolutely and egregiously pessimistic: but he expects everything from the advance of science. "Science alone," he says, "is able to reduce the disharmonies of the human constitution." Again he says, "If it be true that man can live by faith alone, it must be faith in the power of science."

Now, when we ask what is the remedy which science is to afford for the ills of poor humanity, the prospect (even if we could accept it) is dreary enough. According to our author the miseries of the human condition are chiefly two items: first, the uncomfortable disabilities of old age; and, secondly, the coming of death when the instinct of life is still strong. All this, he thinks, will be remedied by the advance of science. Medical science will make old age tolerable, and will prolong our existence till the instinct of life is replaced by the instinct

of death. Then we shall be ready to lie down and die like the beasts. This is the sorry prospect of the boasted optimist.

The book is interesting to me from its unconscious testimony to truths of Revelation, its involuntary witness to the fact, that there is no other rational explanation of man's condition in the world than that which Revelation gives, its naïve and artless admission that it is only *faith* that can subdue the instinctive fear of death: though the author describes such faith as "blind," and brands those who possess it as "fanatics, and simple or primitive persons."

III.

The author discourses upon the harmonies and disharmonies of life. In the lower animals he recognises in general a harmony between the living organism and the conditions which surround it. He cites some instances of disorder, but on the whole he considers that the constitution of lower life is in harmony with its purpose and environment. It is only when we come to man that disharmonies can be said to predominate. Thus he writes, "The sudden change in

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[man's] natural conditions [from those of the anthropoid ape] has brought about a large series of organic disharmonies, which become more and more acutely felt as he [man] becomes more intelligent and more sensitive; and thus there has arisen a number of sorrows which poor humanity has tried to relieve by all the means in its power. . . . The greatest disharmony of the [human] constitution is that of the morbid nature of old age, and the impossibility of reaching the instinct of natural death." To put the matter briefly I suppose we may say, that while in the lower forms of life nature fulfils its orderly course, the animal never failing to obey its proper instinct, and being under no obligation to resist or restrain that instinct, in man there is disorder, his correspondence with his environment is very irregular, he seems to be continually subject to abnormal impulses, so that the actual man, considered even as an animal, falls very far short of the ideal.

IV.

But have we not heard all this before? Is it not in fact the substantial truth that underlies the doctrine of the Fall? What

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does the fall of man mean except that human nature is disordered; that man is very far gone from original righteousness; that his will is no longer naturally and normally in harmony with the Divine will. When men tell us that such and such actions are natural, that they belong to human nature, and therefore cannot be sin, do we not always reply that human nature, as we know it, is fallen, and cannot be taken as the standard of God's purpose in man. That which you call natural to man is perhaps natural only to the fallen man: and the author before us, in all his unbelief, echoes the very words of Christian counsel when he writes, "morality should be based not on human nature in its existing vitiated condition, but on human nature ideal, as it may be [he thinks] in the future": but he claims this as a discovery of science; this which has been the teaching of Revelation through all the ages. I claim the witness of science here as a confirmation of the faith.

V.

After setting forth with much elaboration of detail the miseries of man in this wicked world, our author goes on to discuss the

means that have been proposed to remedy the evil. The second part of his book is entitled "Attempts to diminish the ills arising from the disharmonies of the human constitution," and he considers these attempts under the two categories of religious and philosophical systems.

In these chapters the ills of the human constitution seem to be summed up in the one event death. All lesser disharmonies are disregarded, but the fact that we are subject to death is treated as the one supreme evil. If the sting of death could be eliminated, or at least if death could only be put off until men felt themselves instinctively ready to die, the author seems to think that men might be happy.

The attempts then which the author discusses are attempts to extract the sting of death: if death itself cannot be averted, can any considerations be advanced that shall make the contemplation and expectation of death tolerable.

VI.

We need not follow the author in his discussion of the remedies suggested by systems

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of philosophy. We may accept his summing up, in which he declares that all systems of philosophy have failed of this purpose. He says, "nearly all of them deny the existence of a future life and the immortality of the soul. The greater part of them, however, admit some general principle, incomprehensible but eternal, which will eventually incorporate within itself all individual souls. Feeling that these vague ideas are incapable of conveying consolation to poor humanity in its fear of annihilation through death, philosophers have persistently taught the advantages of resignation. . . . As there is no hope of help from the inexorable, nor mercy from that which is in conformity with the universe, and even with our own judgment, resignation is best." "As it is the general opinion that to be philosophical is to take things as they are, without undue protest, the watchword of all systems of philosophy is to bow to the inevitable, that is to say to be resigned to the prospect of annihilation."

To put it shortly, philosophical systems propose no remedy for the evil of our state, they only bid us bear it.

VII.

But if philosophical remedies thus fail, what has our author to say as to religious remedies? He does not believe in Revelation, but he asserts that all religions are founded upon a belief in immortality: and this belief he declares to have resulted from the unquenchable craving for life, and the desire "to defeat the greatest contradiction in the constitution of man." He is at great pains to shew that the belief in life after death has been almost universal amongst the races of mankind. He insists that "among races that have inhabited very different parts of the earth, races that have had very different manners and have passed through different stages of civilization, the conviction has been strong that death is not the end of all, but only a door leading from one kind of existence to another." Again he writes, "It is quite certain that the vast majority of mankind is convinced that death puts no definite term to existence, and that this life is no more than a passing stage leading to a life to come." All the evidence which has been collected on this point seems to be for the furtherance of the Christian

faith, for it certainly establishes the widespread conviction of humanity that a life beyond the grave is the necessary complement of the conditions of life on earth.

VIII.

Our author goes on to enquire how the various religions founded on the promise of a future life have been successful in defeating that fear of death which he calls the greatest contradiction in the constitution of man. The result of his enquiries is very interesting to us. He finds, as we may expect, that many have professed a faith of which they were not convinced, and that under such a profession death lost none of its terrors: but that when men have absolute faith in the tenets of their religion, and believe in a future life as a certain fact, then the sting of death is past. He cites an instance from the Fiji islands, where the aborigines believe that they will be born again in another world in the exact condition in which they leave this life. So they wish to die before being afflicted with any infirmity, and when a man feels the approach of age or infirmity a festival is held, in which he willingly suffers death.

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Our author seems to think this a satisfactory issue. Again he cites a case, which he appears to think rare and extraordinary, of a Christian girl who believed so firmly in the joys of Paradise, that when stricken with a mortal disease she awaited death with a great impatience. With our Christian experience we should suppose such a case to be not uncommon. The result then of his investigations is this : that religion, sincerely held, is able to give men such consolations as avail against the fear of death : that the belief in a future life is effective, and nothing else is effective as an issue from the disharmony of human life.

IX.

But this solution, though effective, the author is bound to reject as false. He has found no trace of an immortal soul in man. He knows no proof of immortality. Philosophy only enjoins a resignation which fails to satisfy humanity. Religion, if it were only true, would avail, but he cannot accept religion. He is obliged to turn to science and ask her for a solution. What he finds is the dreary solution to which we have

already referred. He hopes that science will, in time, alleviate the ills of old age, and carry forward the years of man on earth till the instinct of life is passed, and the instinct of death takes its place.

What then is the resultant effect of this painful book upon our minds, a painful book because it is written from the point of view of unbelief, and speaks in contemptuous terms of truths that are dear to us as Christians. The resultant effect is to confirm us in the conviction that the riddle of man's life on earth cannot be solved apart from religion. We thank the author for exhibiting so clearly the disharmonies of man's condition, for which the remedy of science is no more effective than the remedy of philosophy. He throws us back upon our most holy faith.

x.

But the author's treatment of the general desire for life seems to be very incomplete. He writes as if it were entirely due to a merely animal instinct of life. He takes no account of the unwillingness to leave dear friends or the desire to see children brought

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up, educated, and advanced in the world. In older time this was understood to be the basis of desire. So we pray in the marriage service that the man and wife may live to "see their children christianly and virtuously brought up," or, as it was until the seventeenth century, "that they may see their childers' childer unto the third and fourth generation."

But the consolations of religion are needed for much more than to enable us to meet death. The disharmonies of man's constitution prevail, and the disharmonies of his environment. From his youth upwards he is conscious of disorder and conflict within him. He is not like the beasts who have only to follow an instinct. Within and without he has trouble, and in every trouble he has to fly to God. Religion is a daily necessity.

The disharmonies of man's nature mean that there are impulses within him that must be held in restraint; faculties that must be exercised only according to God's will, and within the limits imposed by His law. Science may reveal to him the truth that nature itself demands such self-restraint. Philosophy may

proclaim the more excellent way of the ascetic life, but it needs the Faith of Christ, it needs the Gospel of the grace of God, to supply the force with which the conflict is to be sustained.

XI.

Even if the optimistic hopes of science be realised, if the disabilities of sickness and age be removed, and death deferred until instinct desires it, science will not avail against the evil which results from the sin and greed and injustice of men. The disharmonies of man's condition are not merely in his constitution, but also in his environment, in the constitution of the society in which he lives ; therefore, unless the hearts of men can be changed, so that they no longer seek self, but each one seeks his brother's good, so that they bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ ; unless this can be accomplished, the world will remain an evil world, a world of disharmony and disorder. Science is not a converting power to change the hearts of men ; and I fear that the world must wait in vain for the sacrifices which, as our author

admits, the advance to scientific happiness will demand.

Philosophy may indeed teach us to bear with patience the ills that result from the wrong-doing of others, but alas, the supreme source of ill to each of us is our own wrong-doing. Our own sin is the greatest disharmony within us: sin, for which science has no remedy and philosophy no forgiveness. Here we are driven back to the Gospel, "the power of God unto salvation"; the Gospel of justification and of sanctification, of pardon for sin past and of strength for the battle that is before us, the Gospel of hope and of immortality.

VIII.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN MAN.

Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, Nov. 27th, 1904.

THE Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.

Gen. ii. 7.

A MAN of experience, himself no mean thinker, conversant with the habits of thought among men, and qualified to speak for the class to which he belongs, writes in somewhat despondent terms of men's attitude at present towards revealed religion. His words are, "My experience is that one encounters not so much an hostility to dogma, as a species of agnosticism which rather unwillingly feels compelled to put aside the supernatural in man."

There is no word so commonly misused as this word supernatural. With many a writer it denotes anything that is beyond his own limited and perhaps very inadequate concep-

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tion of nature. Many psychical effects have been called supernatural which the more scientific student is able to account for by the natural operation of mental faculties.

I.

But I have no doubt as to the meaning of my correspondent when he speaks of *the supernatural in man*. He accepts the position that all animal life upon the earth has been evolved from some elementary forms of a very low type: that the animal man furnishes no exception to this rule, but represents a more advanced stage than any other animal in the process of evolution. If we accept this as the account of man considered as a mere animal, we have yet to ask whether it will account for man as we know him, or whether there be anything in man over and above that which has been evolved from the primæval amœbæ. Is man, with all his powers of reason and of conscience and of will, only the development of the brute by the process of natural selection, by some natural law securing in the survival of the fittest the general improvement of successive generations? Or may we suppose that at

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some stage in the evolution of the animal something was added from an external source, a new factor, which at once differentiated man from the beasts and placed him in a separate category? If the former be the true statement of the case, then man's being is altogether natural, there is nothing in him but that which has been developed as in the beasts from simple forms of life, only in his case the development has proceeded somewhat further. If, however, the latter be the true statement, if we may suppose that at some point in the course of evolution something was added to the human animal which by unassisted evolution could never have been attained, on this supposition we are admitting that which my correspondent means, when he speaks of *the supernatural in man*.

II.

Naturalistic writers are divided upon the question as to how life originated on the earth. Some of them, like Darwin, admit that there must originally have been an act of creation, and therefore a creator. Darwin wrote, "There is grandeur in this view, that

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life with its several powers has been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one ; and that whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved."

So on a recent occasion Lord Kelvin spoke of an " absolute scientific belief in a creative Power," and deduced a scientific doctrine of a directive Power. He was, however, called to account by other scientists who maintain on these points the agnosticism of science.

To the question how did life first begin, they reply, we cannot tell. Science neither affirms nor denies the existence of a God : but all biologists have to postulate some original form of life, or germ of life, or seed of life, from which the manifold life of the world has been evolved : and in the manifold life thus evolved they include all that they are able to recognise in man—reason, conscience, will. Thus one of their latest writers puts it, " The capacity of the human intellect is in conformity with what we might expect on the theory that it has been evolved for

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practical purposes by the process of natural selection."

This I suppose is the view of those who tell us that they "feel compelled to put aside the supernatural in man." They recognise in man all that the naturalist accounts for, and they see in him nothing besides.

III.

In order to bring the subject to a clear and definite issue, let us grant that the naturalists are right in their theory that all life in the world has been developed, by processes of natural selection and by the survival of the fittest, from some primal cell. Let us grant that man affords no exception to this rule, that all that can be accounted natural in him is to be attributed to the same process of evolution. Then there only remains the question, Is there in man, besides that which can be accounted natural, something else, which for distinction we may term supernatural?

We need not stay to discuss any various possibilities of the "something" which may be hypothecated as *added* to the nature of the animal man. For if it were merely some

new force which quickened the natural powers and faculties of the animal, the hypothesis would excite merely an academic interest. It is only when the thing alleged to have been added is understood to have been a germ of immortality, that a serious and even a passionate interest is aroused. It would therefore be a waste of time to consider any other case than this. To assume anything supernatural in man is therefore (for the purpose of practical argument) to suppose that at some epoch in the development of the animal, there was added to the human nature an element of immortality, or, to adopt at once an accepted phraseology, there was added to man an immortal soul.

IV.

My correspondent continues, "It is surprising how much a book such as *The Nature of Man* is read. The author makes the following assertions, which are too often accepted as the last word of modern biologists: 'The idea of future life is supported by not a single fact.' 'The non-existence of life after death is compatible with the

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whole range of human knowledge.' 'Death brings absolute extinction.' "

Many attempts have been made to prove man's immortality on philosophic grounds. Addison represents Cato as convinced by Plato's argument, "Plato, thou reasonest well, it must be so."

But I suppose that the majority of us who believe in man's immortality base our faith not on reason simply but on Revelation. Reason may afford a strong presumption that man is immortal, but such presumption does not amount to proof: and any attempt to demonstrate man's immortality assumes the previous acceptance of that other proposition in regard to which we have said that science generally professes herself to be agnostic. If we are not convinced of the existence of a personal God Who is immortal, it is vain to argue that the human personality is immortal. It is by Revelation that we are taught that God "breathed into man the breath of life," and created him in "the image of God." It is Jesus Christ "who hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

v.

The critics are all agreed that in the opening chapters of Genesis we have a combination of two independent narratives. The first chapter belongs to what is commonly called the "priestly narrative," on account of the predominance in it of priestly interests and the priestly point of view. The second chapter belongs to the Jehovistic narrative, which is so called because of the writer's preference to speak of God as Jehovah, or as we render it, the Lord. Both these narratives describe a special action or design on the part of the Creator to distinguish man from the lower animals by some particular attribute of God. The Jehovist tells how God, having formed man from the dust of the ground, an expression which may well be applied to the development of the human animal from the primordial cell, then "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." It may be said indeed that "the breath of life," and "the living soul," taken by themselves, denote no more than that which man possesses in common with the animals; but the significant point is found in the statement that *God breathed into him*;

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here is a very graphic figure which implies a special imparting to man of some attribute of God Himself. So Dr. Driver puts it, "Man's pre-eminence, according to the Jehovistic writer, is implied in the use of the special term *breathed*, which is not used of the other animals, and which suggests that [in man's case] the 'breath of life' stands in a special relation to the Creator, and may be the vehicle of higher faculties than those possessed by animals generally."

Still more clearly does the priestly narrative set forth the pre-eminence of man. His creation is described as the result of Divine deliberation, "Let us make man," language which at least denotes that there was some special purpose and design distinguishing man from the animals: and he is said to be created in the image and likeness of God, a spiritual likeness because God is Spirit.

I will not say that this likeness necessarily implies immortality, although it is so interpreted in the Wisdom of Solomon,¹ where we read with manifest reference to this passage, "God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own

¹ II. 23.

eternity." It may be that it is only in the light of the Gospel that we are fully convinced of our eternity: but the statement in the first chapter of Genesis certainly implies something more than the result of that evolution, which constitutes what is called the natural in man.

We have then in these two narratives two independent and corroborative testimonies to a new factor in the evolution of man.

VI.

The early chapters of Genesis are of great importance, on account of the relative place that they give to God and to man and to the Universe in general, in the scheme of creation. They embody some ancient tradition as to the origin of all things, but we do not study them as treatises on Astronomy and Geology and Zoology; we do not expect to find in them any truths of science in advance of the science of the age in which they were written. It is the glory of science to solve her own problems, and she does not ask for a Divine Revelation to save her the trouble of research.

From no point of view could it be regarded

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as the province of Revelation to teach such truths as are discoverable by scientific investigation. It is rather the object of Revelation to put man into possession of truths which he could not reach of himself; and these are truths especially regarding God, and man's relation to God.

VII.

The shallow thinker who has picked up a few of the results of modern criticism, glibly tells us, in disparagement of the Cosmogony of Genesis, that similar Cosmogonies are to be found in the literature of other nations. That is true, but it is only part of the truth. Probably our friend is himself unaware of the essential difference, not to say direct opposition, between the Biblical account of Creation and those other accounts to which he refers us.

The Babylonian Cosmogony has more resemblance to Genesis than any other. It begins with the watery chaos: it speaks of the dividing of the water: it tells of the appointment of the stars for years and for months: it tells of vegetable and animal life, culminating in the creation of man. I suppose

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we should expect these parallels, for all the traditions of creation may be presumed to have had a common origin.

But the contrasts are much greater than the resemblances, and the contrasts are theological, while the resemblances are in material things. In the Babylonian epic we have many gods, in the Biblical account God is one. In the epic the gods come into being in the course of the story. The waters exist first and then the gods are produced. In Genesis there is nothing anterior to God, He was before all things and by Him all things exist. The Biblical account alone sets God above the great and complex processes of nature, and yet in touch with them as the Personal Intelligence and Will that rules throughout: and it sets man in special relationship to God, and regards him as the supreme purpose of creation.

VIII.

The critics tell us that this narrative of Genesis cannot have been cast into its present form until the time of the Exile: and as the Babylonian epic is found on tablets many centuries earlier than this, it is

assumed that the Hebrew legends of creation must have been borrowed from the Babylonian. But even if the narrative was recast at the time of the Exile, it was then but a new edition of annals which had been handed down from time immemorial in Israel. As the Babylonian legends are older than the tablets on which they are written, so the Biblical tradition is older than the books which contain it. Who can say whether the Babylonian legend or the Biblical narrative is the older? There is no more ground for saying that the Hebrew traditions were evolved from the Babylonian than that the Babylonian were evolved from the Hebrew. The contention of the critics is that the polytheistic legend of Babylon was purified by the force of the purer religion and monotheism of the Israelites: but are they not confusing cause and effect? How did the Israelites obtain their purer religion? May it not be that the nobler and purer traditions current in Palestine were not the effect but the moving cause of the purer religion which was there professed. Instead of supposing that the more enlightened faith of Israel purified the Babylonian traditions of Crea-

tion, and produced the Mosaic Cosmogony, may we not rather conclude that the Revelation which was afterwards embodied in the book of Genesis was the basis of the religious enlightenment of Israel, while a corruption of the same Revelation inspired the Babylonian epic?

IX.

However it is not so much to the Cosmogony of Genesis as to the light of the Gospel of Christ, that the Christian looks for the assurance of Revelation that there is more in man than that which has been evolved by natural selection from the primal cell and from the anthropoid ape.

But the naturalistic scientist denies Revelation. Yet he might well consider whether this teaching of Revelation does not supplement his own theory, so as to eliminate what are obviously elements of difficulty and weakness in it.

One weak point in the naturalistic theory seems to be this. If man only differs from the brutes by the circumstance that evolution has been carried further in his case than in theirs, we should not expect to find the

broad distinction which, it is allowed, differentiates him from the rest. If all had the same origin and have been subject to the same process, some more and some less effectually, we should expect instances of every degree between the highest and the lowest.

Or again, the process of evolution is continuous. Discontinuity is absolutely incompatible with it. Everything is gradually developed from what went before: but even Metchnikoff who utters the last word of modern biology is compelled to admit "a sudden change" in the natural conditions of the animal that passes out of the simian into the human state. Such a sudden change is scarcely compatible with the theory of evolution.

X.

These difficulties vanish when the naturalistic theory is supplemented by the teaching of Revelation. The mere human animal may have been evolved under the same conditions as the other animals, yet we are taught that when a fitting stage was reached in his development, God impressed him with

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something of His own Likeness, and breathed into him something of His own Spirit. This wondrous gift must have effected an immediate change in his conditions, and have become a new factor in his evolution. It accounts for the entire pre-eminence of man above the animals, and for the discontinuity between brute nature and human nature.

You may call it the supernatural in man to distinguish it from the mere product of natural selection ; but it belongs after all to man's nature, to that Divine Humanity in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself.

Put aside the supernatural in man and his body is no longer the temple of the Holy Ghost. He has no assurance of the sufficiency of God's grace to enable him to live the worthy life. He lives no longer with the hope of immortality. He dies like one of the beasts, and may be buried with the burial of a dog. Discard the supernatural in man, and there is no longer the call to behold God Incarnate in the Babe of Bethlehem. Unless the first Adam was made a living soul there is no assurance for us that the Second Adam was made a quickening Spirit.

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Let us give full scope to science in her own domain to investigate the laws of nature: she will thus set before us in a clearer light the works of God: but let her not intrude into a sphere in which she has no cognisance, nor presume to deny the Hand of God in a domain beyond her ken. She has not found God in her crucibles. Nevertheless we believe that God is there, operative in nature as in grace. She has not found a soul in dissecting the human body, yet still we believe that God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own eternity.

IX.

THE IMMANENCE OF GOD IN NATURE.

Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, Feb. 25th, 1900.

THE fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

Ephesians i. 23.

MAN is confronted with the phenomena of the universe in which he lives, and he has never been able to resist the fascination of the great problem which these phenomena present, the problem of their origin.

When I speak of natural phenomena I do not refer merely to the phenomena of matter, and the mechanical forces which act upon matter, but to the phenomena also of life with the mysteries of birth and death, to the phenomena of mind and memory and imagination ; to the phenomena of personality and of self, and of the relation of self to that which is not self.

The universe is much more than physical. I am speaking of a universe which includes

not only that which we see and hear and measure and weigh, but that also which we think and which we feel, that which we compass by imagination and by reason.

It has been the problem of problems to thinkers of every age, the basis of all natural religion, to discover the origin of this wonderful universe, the first cause of our own existence and of all that we see and hear and feel and think.

I.

Different solutions of the problem have been proposed. The Atheist declares that senseless matter in its infinitude of possible change, accounts for all the phenomena of the universe. Matter is its own first cause, and the cause of all besides.

The Pantheist, on the other hand, assumes an abstract self-evolving existence of which the universe is the necessary development in time. The world is the necessary result of this first cause, even as the motion of the planets is the result of gravitation. To the Pantheist everything that is, is the manifestation of God ; not of God's will, not of God's choice, but of God's necessity ; the

manifestation of a power which could not help itself; the inevitable result of the working of that power. From this point of view the world is the necessary development of God, or (which is the same thing) the world is God, God brought within our cognisance under the conditions of time and space.

II.

Now I do not think that there is much practical difference between Atheism and Pantheism. It matters little whether the world is self-existent, or whether it is the necessary outcome of a self-evolving existence. It matters little whether we call the universe God, or no God, if we deny a God, Who is above the universe, Who in His wisdom and choice and will created the universe. You will observe that the characteristic error of Pantheism is found in the assumed relationship of the world to the power behind it. The Theist regards that power as working by its own will to produce the universe, so that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. The Pantheist, on the other hand, regards the eternal power as

producing the universe by the necessary sequence of cause and effect as combustion produces heat. So the Pantheist identifies the world with the eternal power. It is that power developed according to its nature in time and space, and thus he says the universe is God or everything is God.

III.

But some of the thoughts that are characteristic of Pantheistic speculation are very attractive and beautiful, they suggest important truths on which we may reverently dwell.

Statements are made which though they cannot be accepted in the sense in which the Pantheist applies them, are yet capable of an application or an interpretation in which they convey valuable truths. The boast that to an enlightened mind all things are divine, that every flower that blooms and every breeze that blows is full of God, that every art and craft and gift and talent is an emanation of God Himself, that the world of matter and of force is but the time-vestment of the eternal and the absolute; all this is very attractive, and it embodies

much truth. But note the point at which we join issue with the Pantheist. With him we consider the lilies: we admit that it is God that clothes and adorns the grass of the field: but the question is, what do we mean by God? The power which underlies the universe, is it personal or impersonal? Does it work of free choice and goodwill as a person, or by the constraint of inevitable law? Is there such a thing as the will of God, or is God only a name for an irresponsible force which mechanically produces a necessary result?

IV.

I am not afraid that you should fall into any error on this point, and therefore I do not hesitate to use the terms which express everything as a function of God. I suppose this was the thought of one who declared that Christianity could only overcome Pantheism by absorbing it. The universe is God's exposition of Himself in time and space, and everything in it is symbolical of something higher, until, in the terms of an infinite series, we are carried up to God Himself. It is written in Ecclesiastes¹ that "He hath made

¹ III. 11.

everything beautiful in his time"; that is (as the context shews) in its own proper time, when it is put to its proper use in its proper season. God hath made everything beautiful, and the beauty is only destroyed by the perverse will of man, who puts God's things to a wrong use, and so violates God Himself. Evil is the misapplication of good, the distortion and abuse of good, and all good is of God.

We look upon the beauty of nature, and we see in it the reflection of the beauty of God. And even when man transforms by art the face of nature, the art itself is an immanence of God, and the beauty is still divine. Is not that why we rejoice to worship in a beautiful building, where the richest treasures of the forest and the rock have been moulded by a loving labour which is itself the gift of God, and by a skill which is truly divine? All is beautiful and bears witness to the beauty of God.

v.

We know that God is everywhere. But do not let us interpret this proposition as if it only referred to the dimensions of empty

space. Rather God is everywhere, for while in His nature He is illimitable, He is to be recognised in everything that fills space: for of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. It is only the denseness of our faculties through sin that prevents us from seeing Him in everything around us. So John Keble taught us to sing:

Two worlds are ours: 'tis only sin
Forbids us to descry
The mystic heaven and earth within
Plain as the sea and sky.
Thou who hast given me eyes to see
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee
And read Thee everywhere.

Thus we are living and walking in a universe in which everything is charged with something of God. At every contact with our environment we may find God. From every such contact we may absorb something of God. For we receive God not only intellectually, by the hearing of His Word and by study of the Revelation which He has given us of Himself: not only ethically when we submit ourselves to His will, and bow ourselves to His command, seeking the

guidance of the Holy Spirit : but we receive Him also through the contact of our soul with that which is divine ; when our soul, quite apart from the exercise of reason, stretches out to meet God, and God draws near to the soul that draws near to Him, and the soul from the touch of God absorbs something of God. God is everywhere, every thing is charged with Him, but our power of absorbing God varies very much, and depends upon the condition of our soul.

VI.

Take an illustration from natural things. If you plunge a piece of polished steel into water and draw it out again, a little water may cling to the surface of the steel, but the steel has absorbed no water : its interior substance is altogether unaffected. But if you plunge into the same water a piece of dry sponge, the sponge will be drawn up full of water. Its own frame remains unchanged, but it is saturated through and through with water, as humanity may be saturated with divinity.

Then if you make a third experiment and plunge a lump of sugar into the water a

different result occurs. The sugar is saturated throughout, but in being thus saturated its own frame is dissolved.

This third instance appears to me to represent that which shall be our experience of the fulness of God when our earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved. Then indeed we shall be filled with the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, and we shall be like God, for we shall see Him as He is.

VII.

But our first and second examples present to us one of the contrasts of soul and soul in this present life. Two souls have the same environment in a universe that is full of God, but they are very differently affected thereby. One soul is like the cold hard bright steel. It is brought into contact with divine things, yea with God; but it absorbs nothing of God. For a while there may cling to the soul some external sensation of a Divine touch, but it quickly evaporates, and tomorrow there is no trace left of the spiritual experience of yesterday. No one can take knowledge of such a person that he has been with Jesus.

But another soul is like the sponge. In contact with God it absorbs something of God until it becomes saturated with God. And this soul finds God everywhere, in thoughts and in doings, and even in inanimate things. It finds the universe divine, and everywhere it drinks of the living water of God. Such a soul knows the meaning of the apostle's language, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "Our life is hid with Christ in God." Such an one realises the apostle's prayer, "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

VIII.

But if souls differ so widely in their capacity for thus finding God, it may well be asked on what conditions the difference turns?

And I will give you two passages of Holy Scripture which indicate at least two necessary conditions of this access to God.

The first condition of seeing God is purity of heart. Our Lord insists on this in the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Without purity of heart a man may be in daily contact with

divine things and yet altogether fail to apprehend God in them.

The second condition is love, and for this we have the word of St. John, "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." There may be other conditions as well, but these two are plain: it is only in purity and in love that the soul attains to the vision of God, apprehends God everywhere, and absorbs into itself something of God.

IX.

We need not set aside as mere delusions the visions which are said to have been allowed to some of God's saints in almost every age. If there is a correspondence between the soul and God, by which the soul receives something of God over and above that knowledge of God which is given to reason and faith, we may expect that the experience of such correspondence will be most vivid and intense in souls of signal purity and love.

Perhaps we ourselves, ordinary Christians as we are, know what it is sometimes without the conscious exercise either of reason

or of faith, to feel the presence of God, to feel that our environment is full of God, and that He is in some way imparting Himself to our souls.

It may be only a feeble and a passing impression to which we in our unworthiness attain. But how much stronger must be the impression which under like circumstances the saint of God receives, in his greater purity and greater love. Is it not thus that the voice of God has reached His prophets under the law and under the Gospel? Is it not thus that visions are accorded to some who are very near to God, visions which seem strange and unintelligible to those of weaker faith?

x.

But if our souls are to find contact with God everywhere and in everything, how fitly does the Holy Eucharist take its place as the crowning action of our holy religion.

We have said that even material things are full of God, if only we have purity to see and love to know. And our Lord has taken the material things of bread and wine, and has ordained that in them we shall find

contact with Himself. In a certain sense I think He makes the Bread and Wine to be the type of all material things, teaching us that in every part of His creation we are to find God. The Blessed Sacrament is of course unique and without a parallel. In receiving It our souls are fed by His own most precious Body and Blood, and there is no other ordinance vouchsafed to us in which the Sacred Humanity is given to sanctify and exalt our poor humanity.

But while It is thus unique, there is a congenity between the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament and that Presence of God by which all things are Sacramental. The Holy Eucharist is the crown and glory of the universal truth that the world is a sacrament of God, and that He is to be found in all His works.

We have the promise that if we seek Him we shall find Him, if we draw near to Him He will draw near to us. The prodigal son may be far from his Father's home, but when he arises to return, while he is yet a great way off, his Father rises and runs to meet him.

Let us set ourselves in earnest to discover

God in everything around us, and we shall surely find Him. But that we may be able to see Him we must purify ourselves even as He is pure, and that we may know Him, love must rule our lives.

X.

THE VALUE OF INDUCTION.

Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, June 5th, 1898.

IF I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?

St. John iii. 12.

NOT merely are these words striking ; there is a method of reasoning indicated in them which is still more striking. The method is that which is called to-day induction. By a glorious induction we are taught to look up from the works of God to God Himself, to pass from His operations and His dealings with men, to the contemplation of His own majestic and marvellous Being. We are led from earthly things to heavenly, and bidden exclaim in awful reverence, Holy, Holy, Holy.

I.

Reason and Revelation are co-ordinate in leading us to the knowledge of God. Reason

takes note of phenomena for which Revelation alone can account. Reason proposes the problem to which Revelation offers the key. Reason investigates the conditions which an adequate hypothesis is required to fulfil. Revelation suggests the hypothesis and satisfies the demands of Reason. Revelation finds its own witness and corroboration in its ability to account for the phenomena of which Reason takes note.

St. Paul asserts in the first chapter to the Romans that there is a certain knowledge of God within reach of the natural mind of man. The invisible things of God are perceived through the things that are made, so that even heathen men knew God, though they glorified Him not as God.

II.

But though the view of God in Nature may be clear, it is of very limited extent. It enables men to predicate scarcely anything concerning God, beyond acknowledging Him as the Great First Cause.

The deep things of God are only revealed to us by the Spirit of God. By successive manifestations, God was pleased to unfold

Himself to the world, speaking at sundry times and in divers manners by the prophets, until in due course men were prepared for His fuller manifestation in the Incarnation of the Eternal Son, and in the Ministry of the Eternal Spirit.

By Revelation then God is made known to us : not, however, by a Revelation which is independent of Reason or which renders research superfluous.

Revelation has never been so accessible to man as it was in the days of our first parents in Paradise. But Milton¹ is doubtless right when he represents Adam as still learning the lessons of Natural Religion, reading the testimony of Nature to Nature's God. Recall his morning song :

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty ! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair. Thyself how wondrous then !
Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works. Yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.

Thus are Revelation and Reason co-ordinate, Revelation supplying to divine

¹ *Paradise Lost*, Book V., 153.

research the place of that inspiration of genius without which scientific induction is altogether barren.

III.

Induction is the most powerful engine amongst the logical resources of Modern Science. It has been defined to be the process of drawing a general rule from a sufficient number of particular cases ; deduction being the converse process of proving that some property belongs to the particular case from the consideration that it comes under a general law.

Archbishop Thomson illustrated the term as follows, "That all bodies tend to fall to the earth is a truth which has been obtained by *induction*, from considering a number of cases in which that tendency has been displayed ; but if from this general principle we argue that a particular stone will show the same tendency then our argument is *deduction*."

But Induction in the modern sense is not a mere generalisation. It is not the simple registration of particular instances, though this was all that Aristotle meant by it, nor

the statement of their aggregate in a single proposition. If this were all, Induction would only require observation and research, it would not demand genius.

IV.

But I ask you to notice what is the mental operation performed in the simple instance which has been cited. It is not an adequate explanation of it to say that we have an innate and primitive belief in the uniformity of nature, and having seen that all bodies in our experience, when set free, have fallen to the earth, we infer that all other bodies will do the same. Rather the process of our thought is in two successive steps. First, from our observation of the phenomenon we infer the existence of a Cause, *i.e.* seeing bodies fall to the earth we infer that there must be something to cause them to fall to the earth. And secondly, the Cause being once inferred, we conclude that the same Cause will, under like circumstances, produce the like phenomena. That is to say, we do not expect a thing to happen merely because in our experience it has always happened before, but rather we expect that whatever

made it happen before will make it happen again.

v.

Thus Induction always infers the existence of a Cause. But this inference adds nothing to our science unless we are able to determine the Cause, or at least to infer so much of the character of the Cause as shall enable us to define its laws and modes of operation. Mere observation of phenomena may shew us that there must be a Cause, but it generally wants genius to recognise what must be the Cause and the law of its operation. This becomes quite clear by the consideration of a notable instance. Before the time of Newton it had been found by observation that all the known planets moved in elliptic orbits. Doubtless it was inferred that there must be some cause to produce this result, and then it was easy to deduce the further inference that if other planets were to be discovered, they also would move in ellipses. And yet this was a hazardous conjecture. There was merely the presumption that *something* caused the motions which had been observed, and that the same *some-*

thing would cause the like motions in planets as yet unknown.

Then came the genius of Newton. By some sort of Inspiration (we must almost say) he was led to investigate what would be the result if all matter attracted all matter with an intensity varying inversely as the square of the distance. Many know well the simple and beautiful reasoning by which he shewed that such an attraction would cause the planets to move exactly as they had been observed to move. Moreover, that the same attractions would account for the path of the projectile and for the acceleration of the stone as it fell to the ground.

VI.

It was impossible to prove by abstract reasoning that such attraction as Newton predicted was inherent in matter. Apart from the actual observation of Nature, any other law of attraction seemed as likely to hold good as the particular law of the inverse square, nor was there any *a priori* reason why matter should attract matter at all. Newton did not *prove* that there was such an attraction in matter, it was impossible to

deduce it from any known facts; but he shewed that if the existence of such attraction were allowed, it would account to the minutest measurement for every known motion in the universe. I suppose this is the most glorious example in the archives of science of the triumphant power of Induction. The theory of gravitation is accepted not by deduction from any known premises (that were impossible)—but by induction because it is shewn to be a sufficient cause for the myriad phenomena that otherwise were inexplicable.

VII.

And in the domain of science the greatest genius is ever finding its sphere of exercise in Induction. It only requires some accuracy of hand and eye to make ten thousand experiments and to tabulate ten thousand results. It is probably a simple matter to recognise some characteristics common to the whole, and to formulate a statement which shall be verified in each. But it requires genius, again I say it requires an inspiration, to go back from the observed results to discover the law under which they

have been produced, to infer the Cause to which they are to be attributed.

Thus genius is ever enlarging the dominions of science, making use of the materials of observation and research, as the basis of Induction. Genius propounds the theories, which at once interpret and account for the results of experiment and the facts of observation.

VIII.

There is a science of heavenly wisdom, the great object of which is the knowledge of God. And the method of this science is Induction. We cannot demonstrate the existence of God or deduce it from the facts of our observation and cognisance. But when we intelligently contemplate the phenomena of the world of life, in which we move, we perceive the evidence of the reign of law in the things which are seen : we pass logically from effects, to the inference of their causes, until even in the province of Natural Religion we are carried by the logic of Induction to recognise the existence of some Great First Cause of all,—Himself uncaused.

But as in earthly science mere observation

and research will carry us but a little way without the co-ordinate and interpreting power of genius, so in the science of the heavenly wisdom, the evidences of God in the world around us will furnish us with a very limited and elementary knowledge of God unless they be interpreted by the key which is supplied by Inspiration, not in this case by an Inspiration springing from the genius of man, but by the Inspiration which belongs to the Revelation of God Himself.

IX.

Just as Newton propounded the theory which harmonised and interpreted the otherwise inexplicable facts of nature in the motions of the universe, so does Revelation present us with the theory of God which harmonises and interprets the moral and spiritual facts, which come under our observation as we seek for God within the domain of Natural Religion.

And as Newton's theory of gravitation compelled acceptance simply because it accounted for the observed facts of science, so in the heavenly wisdom that theory of God which Revelation presents to mankind,

is irresistibly commended to the acceptance of intelligent men by the fact that it does account as no other theory does, for phenomena which are persistently and constantly under our observation.

X.

I put the matter before you in this way, because I think that many people are apt to separate the domains of Revelation and Reason in spiritual matters. If you look exclusively either to Revelation or to Reason to show you God, you lose the force of that evidence which appears so irresistible when Revelation is received as affording the key which explains the phenomena of which Reason takes note. Men's knowledge of the motions of the universe was but a registration of results of little importance in themselves, until Newton's genius gave them an interpretation. But Newton's theory would have found no warrant for acceptance if it had not accounted for these facts.

So man's reasoning about Divine Wisdom will give him but little approach to God until Revelation present the key to interpret the results of his search. But Revelation is

bereft of her proper witness, if her teachings be not brought into connection with the researches of Reason, so that she may prove herself a true witness, by faithfully and correctly interpreting them.

I claim that Reason and Revelation must be brought into connection in regard to the heavenly wisdom, just as observation and genius must be brought into connection for the advancement of the Inductive Sciences.

XI.

Consider what Revelation has to say on three of the greatest problems presented to human contemplation :

(1) The problem of the beginning of the universe ; how did the ceaseless chain of cause and effect begin ?

(2) The problem of the prevalence of evil in the world, side by side with man's fixed conviction that he is destined for good and noble things.

(3) The problem of the conditions on which a holy and merciful God can forgive sin, or can avert the consequences which would normally follow when man comes short of the glory of humanity.

On each of these questions Revelation has given us a clear and definite doctrine. If you take the doctrine simply on the authority of Revelation, some will accept it, some will reject it.

But let reason have her way with these problems : let research display their almost insuperable difficulties : let man in his own wisdom attempt to solve the problems and perforce confess his failure ; then turn to the discredited replies of Revelation ; and what witness is at once found for their truth, by the harmony with which they reconcile discrepancies, and the light with which they interpret difficulties. Revelation proves herself in things that are not seen, by her ability to account for things that are seen.

XII.

The doctrine of the Trinity affords one of the most striking instances of Induction which we can find in sacred lore. The Induction, however, is not from observed facts to some great general principle, but from a long series of statements of a partial Revelation to a comprehensive doctrine accounting for them all.

From the beginning, while the Unity of the Godhead had been always insisted upon, there had ever and anon been manifestations which seemed to imply in some sense a plurality in God. On the first page of the sacred record God was represented as taking counsel, "Let us make man in our image." And there were strange references to the Angel of Jehovah in terms which implied that this Angel was Himself Jehovah. At length the doctrine of the Trinity was presented to man's mind, carrying conviction with it, because it presented the key by which the mysterious statements of the ages were reconciled and interpreted.

XIII.

How is the doctrine of the Trinity to be proved from Holy Scripture? Not by deduction, but by induction. The student of Holy Scripture finds in its pages no categorical statement of this doctrine, but in his pious research he discovers a series of phenomenal statements respecting the Nature of God. He finds even in the Old Testament God the Sender, and God the Sent. He finds reference to a Spirit whose voice is

the voice of God. He finds a Divine Equality attributed to a Son Who is set on the Right Hand of the Throne of God. In the New Testament, he finds One manifested as man Who claims to be the Eternal Co-worker with the Father; Who claims expressly an equality with the Father: Who describes Himself as sent by the Father and yet promises Himself to send Another from the Father. This Other is identified with a Comforter who is Himself a Person: while His presence is spoken of as being equivalent to the presence of the Son. He finds on several occasions in the Gospel story the simultaneous manifestation of Three, whether Three Persons or Three Powers, Each of Whom is in a true sense God. He finds the Apostles commissioned to baptise into the Name of a Father and a Son, and a Holy Ghost; and he finds them invoking these Three in benediction. But the research of the student only carries him into more and more confusion, he finds no formula which shall comprehend the phenomena before him, until the Holy Spirit in the Church propounds to him the doctrine of the Trinity. "There is but one living and

true God, Everlasting, without body, parts, or passions ; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness ; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be Three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ”

This is the doctrine not written in Scripture, but which alone accounts for the language of Scripture : a doctrine not to be deduced from certain texts, but warranted by the most convincing induction from the statements of Holy Scripture.

How little we are in presence of these great mysteries !

We can but bow our heads in awful reverence.

How great we are in the purposes of so great a God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit !

XI.

THE PARADOX OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

Preached at All Saints', Notting Hill, June 9th, 1895.

BAPTISING them into the Name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

St. Matthew xxviii. 19.

WE have been baptised into *one* Name : not into the *names* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, but into the Name of the Eternal God in three hypostases or Persons. The Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one : the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

I.

There is nothing in human experience which corresponds to the relation of the Three Persons in the unity of God. And therefore there is nothing in human language that can express it.

The language which men are compelled

to use upon the subject only approximates to the idea that has to be expressed. Nay more, the highest idea which has to be conceived on the subject is itself very far indeed from the actual reality; it is at the best a human symbol for something that is beyond human conception.

Revelation is necessarily given us in the terms of human thought. So we are told in Holy Scripture of God's right hand, of God's feet, of God's eyes, of God sitting upon a throne, of God walking, of God standing, of His uttering the sound of a voice. No one misunderstands this. No one supposes that God has a body and bodily organs like ours. The statements of Revelation are the translation into the language of human experience, of facts belonging to a domain of which we have no experimental cognisance.

But if God's actions towards us can only be expressed to our understanding by the symbolism of human actions, much less should we expect that the mystery of God's own Being and His eternal relation to Himself should be capable of direct expression, in terms of human thought or human language.

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II.

When therefore we say that in the Godhead there are Three Persons, we are only making a faint attempt to indicate a fact which no human words will adequately express. For the eternal relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is not identical with that which we understand of independent persons on earth; and the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is only approximately symbolised by the distinction between person and person amongst ourselves.

Further, our English language is even more deficient in words by which to define these subtle distinctions, than was the Greek language in which most of our theological definitions were thought out. I do not say that either Greek or any other human language is capable of fully expressing these facts about the Being of God, for no human language can express that which is beyond human thought; but at least it is noteworthy that the Greek theologians never used the word which ordinarily denotes "persons" among men, when they said there were Three Persons in the Godhead. They would

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have said that you and I and another were three persons, *τρία πρόσωπα*, but they said that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were Three hypostases, *τρῆς ὑποστάσεις*. We must go on speaking of Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity, but we must remember that the language is but an anthropomorphic representation of the truth, that the real relation and distinction between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is something which no man hath seen at any time, nor yet conceived.

III.

There is no doubt that some unthinking persons have taken this language too literally and materially. They have thought of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as personages of independent affection and will. They have spoken as though the Father and the Son might be of different disposition towards us, as though the Father were minded to punish us for our sins, and the Son minded to avert the Father's wrath. In this way they have divided the very essence and Being of God. They have made three Gods.

But when this point has been reached then

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there has come a revulsion of sentiment : and in order to restore the unity of God, they have denied the Divinity of the Second and Third Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

This, I am afraid, is a process of thought very prevalent in the popular theology of the day ; first to break the Unity of God by an unwarranted separation of the Divine Persons, so that if each be God there must be three Gods, and then to attempt to correct this error, by declaring that the Father only is God.

IV.

And many of the popular illustrations of the doctrine of the Trinity are dangerously conducive to this same error. When St. Patrick is said to have plucked the shamrock, and tearing off each lobe, declared each to be a leaf, and yet the three together to make not three leaves but one leaf—he may have persuaded the savage Laoghaire that there was no inherent contradiction in the doctrine of the Trinity ; but to us, if we believe the legend at all, he seems to have merely indulged in a play upon words. Or when a preacher of repute in the present day

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points to the church window of three lights, and declares that if any two of the lights were blocked up the remaining one would still be a window; when he dwells upon the fact that each light by itself is therefore a window, and yet the three lights together are not three windows but one window, he is illustrating not the perfection of a divine truth, but the imperfection of human language. If these illustrations were to be pressed so as seriously to teach the doctrine of the Trinity, they would lead to the heresy that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were each separately a God, though together they coalesce, and become only One God.

v.

A more helpful illustration, but one which nevertheless must not be pressed as anything more than an illustration, is found in the tripartite nature of man. There is a Trinity in man of Spirit, Mind, and Body. Each is capable of receiving impressions from without, and the impression made on your Body, your Mind or your Spirit is said to be made upon you. The three are, moreover, organs of some sort of operation,

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and the operation, of whichever it be, is your own. Yet the three are not separable parts of you, though the three together are you. There is a mystery of a Trinity in us. But though it may possibly illustrate, it cannot explain the mystery of God.

VI.

Now some one will perhaps ask this : may we not think of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity as simply three manifestations of God ; may we not say that in them God is shewing Himself to us in three different characters ?

No. This explanation is absolutely forbidden us. If the persons of the Blessed Trinity were merely, so to speak, different exhibitions of God appearing to us in different characters, then the Trinity would belong to time and not to eternity. If the difference of the Persons were only a difference of manifestation, the difference could have had no existence till the manifestation of God to His creatures began ; and we should be driven back to the supposition of the awful solitude of God for an eternity before Creation. The fact of the Trinity is the eternal

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relation of God within Himself, whereby before any object was created for His love, He was already a God of Love. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

So the Greek theologians refused to apply to the Person of the Blessed Trinity that common word for person which is associated with outward presence and might even denote a character, or a mask. But they go out of their way to find a word which defines something real, underlying any outward manifestation, a word that speaks of the substance of a thing rather than of its appearance: there is One God they say, and in the unity of the Godhead there are three *hypostases*.

VII.

Let us therefore understand that the relation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the Blessed Trinity is something altogether different from all that we know on earth. When we speak of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and call them "Persons," we are only using the word that will most nearly symbolise the truth which is itself beyond us. When

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we say that the Second Person was begotten of the First, and that the Third proceeded from the First and Second, we are still using language of the same kind as when we speak of God with hands and eyes and mouth, we are speaking after the manner of men, in the terms of man's experience, we are uttering earthly parables of the unutterable things of heaven.

VIII.

The student who has not passed beyond the province of plane geometry will assert many things to be impossible which in higher dimensions of space are found to be possible.

When he is told for instance of two straight lines which are not parallel, but which if produced indefinitely will never meet, he asserts at once that the statements are contradictory. The straight lines are not parallel and yet they will never meet! Impossible, he exclaims! If they will never meet, by very definition, they must be parallel. But the apparent contradiction is simply due to the fact that the man's conceptions are confined to one plane. As soon as his ideas are extended to space of three dimensions the difficulty vanishes.

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Is it surprising then that in the Revelation of God there are statements which, to our limited understanding, appear to be contradictory? They appear to be so simply because our conceptions are confined to the plane of human experience. If we could rise to the logic of the higher universe of spirit the difficulty would be at once dissolved.

Perhaps the most familiar example is afforded by the apparent contradiction between God's omniscience and man's free will. People are continually asking, if God knows beforehand how I shall act, how is it possible to say that my action is free? Let us admit the difficulty in the logic of our own plane. We may still believe that in the space of the spiritual world the difficulty will be solved.

IX.

So in regard to the Trinity. The difficulty about Three Persons in one God consists in this, that the conditions of personality are defined to be self-consciousness and self-determination: and we do not see how the self-determination of each person in the

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Trinity is to be reconciled with the unity of the will of God. If there be only one Will of God, how can we think of separate personalities in the Trinity? It is easy enough to think of the Personality of the Son after the Incarnation, because this human will fulfils the conditions which seem essential to our conception of a separate person. But the thought of the eternal Trinity, One God not three Gods, One will not three wills, yet three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, present to our human logic questions of the greatest difficulty. We cannot, however, deny the unity of God: we dare not reject the doctrine of the Three Persons: we can only rest on the conviction that in a wider and transcendental world, the contradiction of our logic may cease to be, and the paradoxes of earth may become the truisms of heaven.

X.

But we are not to cast aside the deep things of God as though they were so abstruse and unintelligible as to be of no real profit to us. For it is our highest wisdom to know all that we may know of God,

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receiving humbly and thankfully whatever revelation He has given us of Himself. And our study of His Revelation leads certainly to this conclusion that it is limited not by His indisposition to be known, but by our want of capacity to understand.

If He is only to be known in earthly type and symbol it is because our faculties can only take cognisance of that which is earthly. We cannot grasp ideas that are altogether outside the range of our experience.

But though the Revelation of God be necessarily expressed for us in earthly terms, it is a real Revelation of that which is divine. And it is given to us by the Spirit of God, Who searcheth for us all things, yea the deep things of God.

And the deep things of God are often things which the simplest can accept to their joy and comfort, though the wisest be unable to explain them.

XI.

And so the truth that there is a heavenly Father, and the truth that there is a Divine Son, Who became incarnate that in Him we might know God, and the truth that there

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is a Divine Spirit Who dwells in us to sanctify and to enable and to comfort, and the truth that each of these is God able to the uttermost to fulfil the divine purpose toward us and in us, and the truth that nevertheless God is One, so that our allegiance is undivided and our Love undistracted—all these truths are precious to us indeed, to every one from the wisest to the simplest of the followers of God in Christ Jesus.

Think what it is to say, "I believe in God the Father Who made me," I was not cast at random into the world, but I came into existence by the will of an intelligent Creator. There is therefore a purpose in my life, and as God is good and as God is Love that purpose must be good, and for my good, and for the good of those with whom I have to do. And He Who made me is my Father: there is the stamp of His image upon me, in intelligence, in immortality, in free will!

Ah, but intelligence and free will imply responsibility. Intelligence is given me to know God's will, and liberty that I may choose to do it. Alas, I have failed of the great purposes for which I was made. I

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have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Think then what it is to say, "I believe in God the Son Who hath redeemed me." He has become man: He has imparted to our worn and effete humanity a new source and origin of life in Himself. And He has borne the burden of our sins: He has done penance for them upon the Cross: and in Him I am offered pardon and deliverance. The burden of past guilt need not for ever press me down unto condemnation. At the foot of His Cross I find forgiveness, I hear His gracious word of Peace bidding me sin no more.

Sin no more! But how shall the future be made better than the past? I sinned before: how shall I get the power now to live the holy life? Sin no more! A beautiful word if one could but fulfil it.

Think then what it is to say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth me." Ah, this is what I want. He sanctifieth me. He gives me grace and power to overcome temptation, to triumph over the evil that besets me, to tread the arduous path of holiness, to live the life of my vocation. I need not sin unless I choose. I can do all things

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that God would have me do, for His grace is sufficient for me.

XII.

And while I thus rest upon the grace and direction of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, there is no fear of any cross purpose in Their will concerning me, nor any distraction in the voice with which they call me. For it is not "They," but He. The Three Persons are one God, one in will and purpose, one in Their love to me, and in the grace which They give; One God from eternity to eternity. Blessed be the Holy and Undivided Trinity now and for evermore.

All that we need to know for our strength, our guidance, our salvation; all that we need to search of the deep things of God; all is given us. Not enough to answer every idle question, but enough to satisfy the yearning of the heart and the holy aspiration of the soul, all is given us.

We have only to set ourselves to do the will of God, and all shall be revealed to us, in the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Love of God, and in the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

XII.

THE PLACE OF WILL AMONG THE COSMIC FORCES.

Preached at St. Peter's, Bexhill, September 27th, 1894.

NEVERTHELESS he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Acts xiv. 17.

WE praise God because He is, because He alone is the Self-Existent and Unconditioned. We praise Him as the Creator and Preserver of all things.

In giving God thanks for those natural gifts of which the harvest is the type, we proclaim before the world our faith in God as their Giver. We receive not the fruits of the earth as the productions of an impersonal Nature, nor as the resultant of inherent laws self-existent from eternity in the matter of the universe; but we receive them at the hands of a Heavenly Father, Who in His

bounteous provision for our needs is bearing testimony of Himself. He has not left Himself without witness in that He does good and gives us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

The act of thanksgiving for the harvest has within the last twenty-five years become very popular. But this observance logically implies another observance.

If it is right to thank God for the fruits of the earth it must be right to pray to Him beforehand for His blessing on the seed sown.

The two actions of prayer for a blessing on the seed sown, and of thanksgiving for the fruit ingathered, have both the same significance in the witness that they bear to a faith in the good Providence of God. Neither action would be possible on the part of men who thought that the laws of Nature were independent of Divine control.

I.

T For the laws of Nature I have the profoundest respect. St. Paul declares that God is not a God of confusion. And the

reign of Law in the universe witnesses to me in confirmation of the Apostle's statement.

How unspeakable would be the confusion if there were no certain connection between cause and effect in nature; if the seasons followed one another by chance, if the good seed sown might equally produce wheat or tares, if gravity and the laws of the mechanical forces were fitful in action and never to be relied upon: if the sun might or might not give forth his rays of light and heat and power, if Nature in fact were the sport of a mischievous fairy, if not indeed of a malicious demon! Is the reign of law then contrary to God? Nay, rather is it not a witness to the goodness of the Creator, to the Providence of a God of order?

II.

And yet some find a difficulty in discovering any room for the action of a personal God amidst the universal reign of law which is observable in the phenomena of the natural universe. At the most it seems to them that God's action must have been that of a great mechanician who devises a wondrous piece of clockwork, winds it up, sets it

going, and then leaves it to itself and touches it no more. They cannot, indeed, find apart from God a First Cause for the forces of Nature. They therefore admit the action of a great Creator, but since first the world was launched upon its course of endless cause and effect they see no trace of any such interference as would constitute a providential government of the world. Now I suppose it is indeed true, we have the very word of Revelation for it, that there are works from which God is resting on this seventh day. We understand that He has ended His work of *Creation* as far as regards the material universe with which we are concerned.

III.

And yet it would be the reverse of reasonable, while the impress of human mind and human will is ever being made upon the course of nature around us, to suppose that the Divine Mind and the Divine Will must needs have ceased from action. We believe in a God of Providence Who answers prayer: but we cannot satisfy ourselves with that strange mechanical theory that prayer for material things is only answered, because

God from the beginning foreknew who would pray and who would not pray, and that He so arranged the machinery of the universe as to provide an answer for each separate prayer of faith which, throughout the ages, He foresaw. This theory does indeed provide for the answer to prayer, but it does so by a method that strains the effort of imagination. It places God far off and relegates to a by-gone eternity the operation of His bountiful love to us.

Surely it is a very imperfect appreciation of the reign of law, which deems it to militate against the sleepless Providence of God.

IV.

Consider what the Reign of Law means in relation to the harvest. The corn or wheat is cast into the ground. Every grain buried beneath the soil is influenced according to fixed laws by the chemical action of earth and air and light. If the proper conditions are fulfilled the corn will grow. If the suitable weather comes—rain and sun in proper season—the green blade will spring and grow up. If no blight or storm injure or destroy the development, we shall presently see the

ear, and then the full corn in the ear, furnishing the staff of man's life. But the soil, and the rain, and the light, as well as the blight and the storm, are all subject to natural laws which we freely admit can never be broken. The chemist is able to analyse the soil and measure its fitness to sustain vegetable life. And though we have not yet learned to forecast the contingencies of the weather, from seed time to harvest, we are able to trace back to natural causes the storm or the heat or the drought : at least we have discovered enough, to compel us to assume that the causes exist, in the conditions of the natural Universe.

v.

But amongst the causes which are at work under the Reign of Law, there is one great force which must not be ignored, which is constantly being compounded with the forces of natural science, to produce results which an inanimate and impersonal Nature could never produce. If you look upon the face of some savage uninhabited land you see what an inanimate nature can produce. Beautiful scenery it may be ; luxurious vegetation ; a

profusion of wild fruits ; examine the configuration of the country and you see the effect of nature's forces, you trace the results of glacier, of earthquakes, or of flood. But wherever man has carried the intelligences of civilisation the whole aspect of the earth is changed. There has been no miracle : no violation of the laws of nature ; no suspension of those laws ; but the force of human will has been compounded with the other forces of nature, to produce a new resultant. To return to our wheat field ; the unintelligent forces of nature did not plough the ground or sow the seed, but the mind of the farmer intervened not to violate the laws of nature but to co-operate with and to direct them ; the man's will constituted a force to be reckoned with, as truly as the influences of earth and air and light, or as the vital forces inherent in the seed.

VI.

To say that the climate of the country is produced by natural causes is a truism. It is what it is, in accordance with the laws of nature. And yet man's will has been an important factor in making it what it is.

The felling of the forests, the drainage of the plains, the cultivation of the soil, the burning of coal; all voluntary acts on the part of man, have had their effect in modifying the climate. And the weather, day by day, is likewise influenced by circumstances which may be traced to the exercise of man's will.

See the dark rain cloud driven before the wind. The rain has not yet begun, but while we watch it, the process of condensation within the cloud reaches a critical point, and the refreshing drops are cast in their abundance on the field in which the wheat is sown. Why has that particular field received the rain? Why did not the wind carry the cloud in some other direction? Or why did the cloud bear its burden so long, or not bear it longer, to water a neighbour's field? The scientist will tell you doubtless with truth that the causes were entirely natural. The wind was produced by natural cause, both in direction and in force it was precisely the result of those causes. The cloud also was naturally produced, and it began to let fall the shower precisely in accordance with natural law. Yes, fundamentally doubtless the shower was due to some particular

relation between the heat of the sun and the humidity of the earth. But man's will operated also. The fires in the town over which the cloud passed, had something to do with it. The firing of cannon at artillery practice, several miles away, had something to do with it. The draining of a fish pond, and the felling of a wood had something to do with it. The furnaces at the iron-works, the retorts of the chemical works, the sulphurous smoke of the brick kiln ; all these had something to do with it. And in all these the will of man was operative.

VII.

Nay, more, every step that we take, every sound that we utter, every movement of our body, has an effect upon the physical world around us. The molecules of matter with which we are in contact are displaced, and their displacement affects other molecules, and so on without limit, till the impulse which we originated in the freedom of our will, thrills through the universe of matter. The man of science speaks of matter and of force, and the problems to which he addresses himself have mainly to do with the behaviour

of matter under existing forces. But if the problem concerns that part of the universe which is subject to human action, he must reckon amongst the forces of which cognisance must be taken, the human will, and the voluntary action of man under the direction of that will.

VIII.

There are some indeed who deny the existence of any free will in man ; that which appears to be volition is for them only the result of molecular forces. Whether the man thinks, or reasons, or remembers, or loves, or hates, these operations are but the working of forces within him over which he has no control ; so far from the will directing the man, the will is itself as certainly due to a natural law, as the falling of the apple from the tree is due to the law of gravitation. Certainly, if man has no free will and no responsibility, it is idle to talk about his prayers. But probably there are very few who go so far as to deny the liberty of man's will. We have rather to do with those who would so magnify the glory of man as to make his will a force supreme in the

Universe. Man is the great God of the day. I know no more potent force in the universe, says the unbeliever, certainly no force of higher range, than the free will of the intelligent Being,—Man.

IX.

We Christians know something of a higher Will than man's: but we agree in recognising the glory of humanity in man's free liberty of choice. But the man of science is bound to recognise it also and to reckon it amongst the forces operative in the world. Unless man be himself a mere machine, unless free will be a delusion, liberty a mockery, volition an empty fancy, self-restraint a contradiction in terms, every living man is daily putting into operation endless chains of cause and effect which need to be taken into account as much as the law of gravity itself when we review the phenomena of Nature around us.

X.

But if it is to be thus admitted as a scientific fact that man's will is ever potent as one of the forces which mould the universe, is it not arbitrary and unreasonable

to say that there is no room for the effective operation of God's will? We do not call it a violation of the laws of Nature that man's muscular energy directed by man's mind should alter the face of the earth, cutting through an isthmus to join sea to sea, erecting an embankment to steal land from the ocean, and perchance some day irrigating the arid desert. We do not call it a miracle when a beautiful building is erected ~~such as this one in which we worship~~, yet it is quite certain that if the forces of nature had been left to themselves, without the exercise of human will, the marble would still be unhewn in the quarry, and the timber in the forest. No law of Nature was broken, but the force of human will co-operated with the other forces of God's creation, and directed them to the building of ~~this~~ temple in His honour.

XI.

And as man's will is ever operating so we believe is God's will. Man in his little sphere directs the forces of Nature, much more so does God. By the ministry of angels He moulds the forces of the Cosmos : so at least we are led to think.

Surely we may allow to God, even in the material world, at least that liberty of will, and that power of direction, which man is exercising every day. And as the earthly father in answer to his child's request will, by the impress of his own will, start and control a train of forces; so God answers our prayers, by the impress of His own Will upon the forces of Nature, while yet the reign of law remains inviolate.

XII.

Yet I admit that this position is not without its difficulties. The effect of human agency in the world is traced back to human action directed by human will: and human action however it be controlled by the intelligence, is ultimately resolved into the exercise of that muscular power which the living man can wield, at the spontaneous impulse of his will. But it is not quite the same thing to allege that the Divine Will is to provoke in the material universe impulses which, since they modify the forces of the Cosmos, must themselves be centres of force. It may seem to some that this introduction of new energy from the Divine Mind is a

violation of that Sabbath rest from Creation, which we understand the Almighty to be taking.

XIII.

But if the difficulty seems to any to be insuperable, I am willing to take another ground. The objection appears to resolve itself into this, that we can conceive God as acting upon mind, but not in the present condition of the universe as acting upon matter. This, I suppose, is the basis of the distinction, which those persons draw who think that prayer for spiritual blessings is reasonable enough, but prayer for favourable weather, or for any other blessing of the natural universe is not allowable.

But I have already pointed out the large part that human action plays in the events of the Natural Universe. And if God is able to direct human action—even if He be unable under the conditions on which He is pleased to deal with us in the present dispensation, to modify the material forces of the world—it is enough. To impress the minds of men, and so to rule the wills of men ; this implicitly constitutes a power in

the Universe to move mountains, as well as to answer every prayer of faith.

XIV.

He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. We do not believe in a God who made the Universe of old, and then fell asleep! Nay, but we remember the words of our Lord, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." We believe in a God of ever-wakeful Providence under Whose will all things are directed in the material as well as in the Spiritual Universe.

If our prayers for temporal blessings be restrained, it is not from any doubt of the power of God to grant them. They may often be restrained by our ignorance as to what is good for us: when in the very humility of our faith we would rather say, "Thy will be done," than petulantly work for seeming good things, which may perchance result in no true blessing to us.

XV.

And herein, thanksgiving is easier for the true child of God than ~~prayer~~ ^{petition}. There is no restraint upon our thanksgiving; for though

we know not beforehand what would be good for us; though we know not at the time what God is doing with us; yet afterward we are able to look back and recognise His love, even in the disappointments and in the sorrows of life.

The more our wills are conformed to the will of God, the more shall our prayers merge themselves into praise. Thus it has been, that when death has been near at hand, and the light of heaven seems to be already dawning upon the soul of the departing servant of God, he has appeared almost to forget prayer; and as if he were already within hearing of the angelic songs, he occupies with thanksgiving and with praises those awful hours, which most of all in life seem to need the tremulous petition and the strife of prayer. It is recorded of a saint of old that as he lay long time a-dying he passed his days in the utterance of praise and thanksgiving, repeating with peculiar devotion the words of the Gloria in Excelsis, "We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory."

(And the life of the Abbess Hilda of Whitby is summed up in the saying, "She

served God in health and praised Him in sickness."

Let us tune our hearts to thanksgiving and praise, thus rehearsing our entrance into the joy of our Lord.

XIII.

SELF-JUDGMENT.

“AND then shall every man have praise of God.”

1 Cor. iv. 5.

IN the Revised Version the sense is clearer : “And then shall each man have his praise from God” ; that is, each man shall have his own proper meed of praise ; his work shall be adjudged by God, and if he have but given a cup of cold water to one of Christ’s little ones, he shall not lose his reward. For the moment nothing is being said about our sins and shortcomings, but whatever the Holy Spirit has enabled us to think or to say or to do, that is good, it shall not be forgotten. Every man shall have his due meed from God.

The statement comes as the climax of the striking passage which the Church finds so suggestive of Advent thoughts : “With me it is a very small thing that I should be

judged of you, or of man's judgment : yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified ; but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God."

I.

It is very easy to find contradictory phrases in any author if we consider his words in naked isolation, without regard to the context or to the course of thought in which they occur. The Bible affords no exception to the rule. If two different writers in the Sacred Scriptures seem to contradict one another, as St. Paul and St. James, it is open to the hostile critic to allege that they were not agreed.

But if phrases that seem to be contradictory are found in the same writer, and even in the same Epistle, it is plain that we are missing his meaning. In the writer's own mind the statements must be capable

of reconciliation, and if instead of being the slave of the letter we enter into the spirit of his argument we shall probably find that all is in harmony.

II.

In the passage before us St. Paul says, "I judge not mine own self," as if self-judgment were to be deprecated, and yet, in the eleventh chapter of this Epistle he writes, "Let a man examine himself," and, he adds, "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged."

If I were giving a lecture on the Greek Testament I might distinguish six different words which may sometimes be rendered by the English verb to judge. But it is enough to say here that in the passage before us St. Paul uses a word which implies that the process of examination is carried out to the end, so that the matter is not merely judged, but adjudged, a conclusion is reached, a verdict is pronounced. St. Paul declares that it is only God who can pronounce such a verdict. We must await His judgment. Man's day counts for very little. We cannot adjudicate before the time.

God alone can award every man his proper meed.

III.

I have no doubt that St. Paul followed himself the precepts which he gave to others. Thus he examined himself, he proved his own self, he judged himself: but he knew himself to be but human, and therefore fallible. The real judge (he said) is God. Therefore I adjudicate not on my own case. I judge not myself. Yea, though there be nothing on my conscience, though I know nothing by me for which I should be condemned, I will not invade the province of God, or forestall His judgment upon me. I do not pronounce myself righteous, I leave that to God. Though I know nothing by me, I do not on that account claim to be justified.

IV.

Some have traced a vein of self-righteousness in the Apostle's claim, "I know nothing by me"; but this is altogether to misunderstand the position. In fact the assumption of self-righteousness is the very thing that

he disclaims in the words, I am not therefore justified.

St. Paul was conscious enough of past sin. Did he not describe himself as the chief of sinners? But the Christian, in thinking about his sins, always draws a strong line of demarcation between the past and the present. If he has not a past of which he has need to be ashamed before men, he cannot review his life as a whole without recognising many points at which he went astray from the path of God's Will, he confesses that he has sinned in thought and word and deed, by his fault, his own fault, his own most grievous fault. But he has brought his past to God, he trusts that in the mercies of Christ those sins have been forgiven and blotted out ; that they are remembered no more against him. But what about the present? Well, he is neither infallible nor impeccable ; nevertheless, if he is walking in the grace of God as one born of God, then (as St. John witnesseth) he that is born of God doth not commit sin : his failures are due to infirmity rather than to will : he is not allowing himself in anything that he knows to be sin : and if sin

be found it is the accident rather than the rule of his life. And yet he does not claim to be sinless in the sight of God. He defines his position precisely in St. Paul's words, I know nothing by me : yet this does not mean that I am righteous : I must leave that to God. He that judgeth me is the Lord, of Whom every man shall receive his proper praise.

v.

It seems probable, however, that St. Paul's words refer to his official rather than to his personal character. His qualifications as an apostle had been called in question, and his ministerial work had been arraigned. On these issues he can only appeal to God. I am conscious (he says) of no official delinquency, yet this does not decide the matter. He that adjudicates my case is the Lord.

Incidentally St. Paul treats very lightly the judgment which the Corinthians passed upon him. With me (he says) it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment. I think we must apply this statement strictly to the complaints that had been made respecting his discharge

of his great office. It was a matter in which his converts could not possibly be in a position to judge. It lay between himself and God : but he will not even set up his own judgment in the matter : God must be the judge. You observe with what great courtesy he speaks. He repudiates their judgment, but he will not assert his own judgment against theirs. "I judge not mine own self."

VI.

On the general regard which we ought to pay to public opinion as a rule of conduct St. Paul teaches us elsewhere to adopt a middle course ; at least he guards us against two extremes. On the one hand he warns us against an excessive love of popularity. There is always a danger lest those who have a message to deliver should water it down to suit the taste of those whom they address. On this point St. Paul speaks emphatically to the Galatians : "If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ." And you remember his anxiety to clear himself from any imputation on this score when at Miletus he addressed the

Elders of the Ephesian Church: "I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." On the other hand he writes to the Corinthians. "Give no offence either to Jews or to Greeks, or to the Church of God, even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit but the profit of the many, that they may be saved." And in the second Epistle he describes himself and his colleagues as "giving no offence in any thing that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God." So he urges the Romans not to let their good be evil spoken of, and bids them provide things honest in the sight of all men: and he puts it again more explicitly to the Corinthians, "We take thought for things honourable not only in the sight of the Lord, but honourable also in the sight of men."

Here it is distinctly laid down that it is not enough to do that which is materially right with a good conscience towards God, but we must avoid as far as possible anything that would be misunderstood and

misinterpreted, and would give occasion to the adversary to blaspheme.

VII.

Thus there are two dangers between which we have to steer a middle course, and I think that both dangers are very real in the present day. I am sure there are some who claim the liberty to do what they hold to be right in their own conscience before God, without any regard to the effect of their conduct on other people—perhaps on weaker brethren. They are like those at Corinth who, in their superior knowledge, believing that an idol was nothing in the world, thought it no harm to partake of the feast on heathen sacrifices, regardless of the fact that weaker brethren were misled. Then there are those who seem to fall into the opposite error, they are terribly sensitive as to the opinion of those around them: they are always wondering what people will think or say of them: they want to do right, but they are afraid to make a stand for principles which are unpopular; they keep silence when they ought to speak; they pass over with a laugh the vice which

they ought to condemn, and practically they allow themselves to go with the multitude to do evil.

Certainly we need the guidance of God's Holy Spirit here. If St. Paul says in the one place "Do I now please men, for if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ," and, in the other place, "I please all men in all things, seeking the profit of the many that they may be saved," it is quite clear that we need that spiritual gift of knowledge and judgment by which he tells the Philippians that they shall "approve things that are excellent," or (as the margin gives it), "that they shall prove things that differ," *i.e.* that they shall discern the differences, that they shall discriminate between a weak surrender of principle and a courteous consideration of others' feelings, between contempt for others' opinion and the faithful testimony to the truth.

VIII.

Public opinion will always be a potent factor in a civilised community. Some may yield slavishly to it, some may set themselves to resist it, but none are really

indifferent to it. The power of public opinion in a land of free institutions such as ours is immeasurable. No legislation of any importance is possible in England unless public opinion have first approved the principles that underlie it. Public opinion determines the conditions of our social life, it regulates our amusements, it allows many things that make the hearts of good men sad : but public opinion is never unanimous, and it is seldom stable. On every question public opinion is in a state of flux.

Here is the great responsibility of the individual. Every individual helps to make public opinion : and each one is called of God to swell the tide of honest and wholesome public opinion, but always to utter his protest, even though he be alone as a voice crying in the wilderness, when public opinion would sanction injustice or condone vice.

IX.

Life is complex, and no man stands alone. We belong to a great community, and we correspond to a wonderful environment. Unceasing is the action and reaction

which each of us maintains with his surroundings. Perpetual is the influence of mind on mind and spirit on spirit within the community.

But with all this each soul stands alone before God. Each man has his own individuality, and his own personal character is ever being developed. He is influenced by others, and he exercises an influence on others, but his own personal responsibility remains unimpaired before God. As a single individual soul he will be judged in the day when every man shall have his praise from God.

May we not therefore paraphrase St. Paul's words and take them as our own. With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of man's judgment. Men may respect me or men may despise me, they may appreciate me or misunderstand me. It is a very small thing. To my own master I stand or fall. Nay, I do not venture to put a value on this poor life of mine. I judge not mine own self. God only can judge. It is true that I have nothing on my conscience. Past sins have been washed out in the precious blood of

Christ, and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I am not allowing myself in any known sin. I know nothing by me. Yet I dare not say that I am therefore justified, my righteousness is but as "filthy rags": my holiest things need to be purged: but I plead the Name of Christ and I wait for His appearing. I know that at His coming the hidden things of darkness will be brought to light, sins unsuspected and unknown; but at the same time the counsels of the heart shall be made manifest, every good motive, every holy purpose, every high aspiration, "and then shall every man have his praise from God."

x.

Yes, surely, there is a call to us in the Advent season to place ourselves alone with God, to remember that we must die alone with Him, and that we must be judged alone with Him. Men are dying day by day around us, yet death is for each a separate, personal, individual event. We may think of small and great standing in

one great throng before the judgment seat of God, yet each in that great throng is standing alone before God; each is judged as though there were none other.

And as we shall die alone, and be judged alone, so there is a sense in which we live alone. There is for each one of us a personal religion, a personal intercourse of the soul with God, in which a stranger cannot intermeddle. Our life is hid with Christ in God.

We are placed here in a great world, and in that world we find the sphere of duty towards God in the service of our generation for God's sake. In contact with the world we find the discipline by which God would train us and prepare us for the fulfilment of His higher purposes.

Again, we are placed here in the great Church of God, in which we find a revelation of the truth of God, in which we find means of grace and helps by the way, in which we find companionship and encouragement in the fellowship of the saints.

But though we are placed in the world and in the Church, yet it is as individuals that we have to work out our own salvation

with fear and trembling. The Church may shew the way, the world may afford the sphere in which to practise the Christian graces, but faith and hope and love are the possession of each separate soul, and stamp the character of Christ on each.

Let us therefore stand to-day—each alone with God—and judge ourselves, while we wait for the glorious appearing of our great Lord, when “each man shall have his praise from God.”

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